

ACLU OF RHODE ISLAND CANDIDATE SURVEY 2022

SECRETARY OF STATE

Thank you in advance for participating in our candidate survey. Please respond to the 7 questions below. If you wish to offer explanatory comments to any of the questions, space is available at the end of this questionnaire. If you would like clarification about the ACLU's position on any of these issues, we encourage you to contact our office or visit our web site at www.riaclu.org for more information.

*You can return the survey by email to riaclu@riaclu.org, by fax to (401) 831-7175, or by mail to ACLU of RI – 128 Dorrance St., Suite 400 – Providence, RI 02903 **Please return by Monday, August 15, 2022.***

Name: Gregg Amore

1. Do you support a constitutional amendment allowing for same day voter registration?

YES

2. “Prison gerrymandering” is a term given to the practice of counting inmates, for purposes of drawing voting districts, as residents of their place of incarceration, rather than their home address from which they otherwise must vote. Do you support legislation that would eliminate prison gerrymandering in Rhode Island?

YES

3. Any voter who goes to the wrong polling place on election day is given a provisional ballot, but only their votes for federal office are counted. Do you support legislation that would provide for counting votes cast on provisional ballots for all offices for which the voter is legally eligible to vote?

YES

4. Do you support the repeal of the state's photo “Voter ID” statute?

While I have supported the repeal of this law in the past – it now has support from leaders in the voter access space like Stacy Abrams and is widely accepted by the public which is evidenced by polling. Rhode Island has one of the most expansive and inclusive Voter ID laws in the nation I am committed to making sure every Rhode Islander has access to the tools

they need to be able to exercise their most fundamental right – the right to vote – by making the process open, transparent, and accessible, and getting folks the ID they need to vote.

5. Do you support requiring major public bodies in holding in-person meetings to allow for public attendance and participation remotely as well?

YES

6. The Attorney General's office is currently charged with the duty of interpreting and enforcing the Open Meetings Act and the Access to Public Records Act. In light of the Secretary of State's involvement with public records maintenance and its responsibility for maintaining a web site of all open meetings, do you support moving enforcement of these laws to the office of the Secretary of State?

As a matter of due process, I do not believe that a singular agency should have the responsibility of being judge, jury and executioner. While I believe that the issue is analogous to the interaction of the Board of Elections and the office of Attorney General with regards to campaign finance violations and that the office of the Secretary of State should have a larger role in the enforcement of our open meetings and public records laws, the office of Secretary of State as it is presently constituted does not have the staffing or the resources necessary to take on the added responsibility of enforcing the Open Meetings Act and the Access to Public Records Act.

Bifurcating the responsibilities of the office of Secretary of State and the office of Attorney General may address the due process concerns of the agencies impacted by the laws, however having an agency attempt to enforce the laws without having the adequate resources to address the complaints brought to its attention would not serve the public's interest in ensuring an open and transparent government.

As Secretary of State one of the first steps I plan on taking is working with my fellow general officers and other branches of government to eliminate duplicative services and streamline the responsibilities and policies of the office.

A practical and efficient way to improve the open meetings law would be to improve the SOS web page infrastructure to create a universal portal where city and town postings and all supporting documentation and information could be accessible in a one stop, consistent and user-friendly platform.

7. What changes to improve the Access to Public Records Act and the Open Meetings Act would you actively support to promote government accountability and transparency?

I believe that we should consider exempting those materials that are made available on an agency's website from having to be produced by the agency as part of any request. This would encourage agencies to make information more readily available much in the way that

Covid caused the House to provide all the written testimony submitted to the committees available on the general assembly's website.

While APRA makes clear that an agency is not responsible for researching and analyzing APRA requests to provide the answers to questions the requester may be looking for in the documents, as a practical matter I have been told of situations where agencies are expanding an hour of free search time to produce records that are already available to the public online. Ideally agencies would recognize that it is more cost effective for them to make more of their information available online and thus provide more open and transparent government.

The exemption would be limited only to those documents that the requester can be directed to and would not limit the ability of the requester to appeal the decision or forward a complaint to the office of the Attorney General.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS