



Rhode Island Board of Election's adopted rule appears to create gigantic, illegal loophole

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The use of mail ballots in Rhode Island's elections has exploded, with the 2016 general election seeing a doubling of mail ballot usage compared to recent previous elections. The use of mail ballots was marketed as 'early voting' by some officials.

In 2011, the Rhode Island General Assembly passed a voter ID law ([RI General Law 17-19-24.2](#)). This law is simply written, and states as follows:

"From and after January 1, 2014, any person claiming to be a registered and eligible voter who desires to vote at a primary election, special election or general election shall provide proof of identity listed in subdivisions (a)(1)."

There is nothing in this law to create an exemption to voter ID requirements for mail ballots. There is nothing in this law that limits the ID requirements to ballots cast in person, only on election day.

This voter ID law was passed many years after legislation was passed which enabled voting by mail ballot.

The Rhode Island Board of Elections created a rule to address Rhode Island's voter ID law in 2012. [This rule](#), whose intent is to implement Rhode Island's voter ID law, was written to only make voter ID applicable to voters who cast ballots "on Election Day":

"Any person claiming to be a registered and eligible voter who desires to vote on Election Day shall provide proof of identity."

This rule creates what appears to be an illegal loophole that allowed roughly 40,000 votes to be cast in 2016 by voters who have been improperly exempted from providing ID as required by Rhode Island law, effectively allowing anyone to vote by

