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State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

Gina M. Raimondo
Governor

EXECUTIVE ORDER

20-11

March 23, 2020

NINTH SUPPLEMENTAL EMERGENCY DECLARATION –
DELAYING THE PRIMARY ELECTIONS
AND PREPARING FOR A PREDOMINANTLY MAIL BALLOT ELECTION

WHEREAS, on March 9, 2020, I issued Executive Order 20-02 declaring a state of emergency for the State of Rhode Island due to the dangers to health and life posed by COVID-19 and activating the state disaster emergency plan;

WHEREAS, Rhode Island continues to see an increase in the number of residents who have tested positive for COVID-19;

WHEREAS, slowing the spread of community transmission of COVID-19 in Rhode Island and the United States is critical to allow our health care providers to help the afflicted;

WHEREAS, the Rhode Island primaries for the election of delegates to the national conventions and the presidential preference primary (collectively, the "Primary") are currently scheduled by law for April 28, 2020;

WHEREAS, in the 2016 Primary, over 180,000 Rhode Islanders cast their ballots at polling places across the State;

WHEREAS, in 2016 Rhode Island had over 146 polling places, and in 2020 there are 182 polling places planned for the Primary with each polling place requiring a minimum of 8 poll workers;

WHEREAS, the Rhode Island Board of Elections ("Board") has requested that the 2020 Primary be postponed to June 2, 2020 in order to conduct a predominantly mail ballot election;

WHEREAS, the Rhode Island Secretary of State joins in the Board's request that the Primary be predominantly a mail ballot election;

WHEREAS, the State continues to work tirelessly to contain the spread of COVID-19 within its borders; and

WHEREAS, minimizing contact between individuals, including those who would ordinarily vote at a polling place, will help to slow the spread of COVID-19.

NOW, THEREFORE, I GINA M. RAIMONDO, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, pursuant to Article IX of the Rhode Island Constitution and the Rhode Island General Laws, including but not limited to, Title 30, Chapter 15 and Title 23, Chapter 8, do hereby order and direct the following:

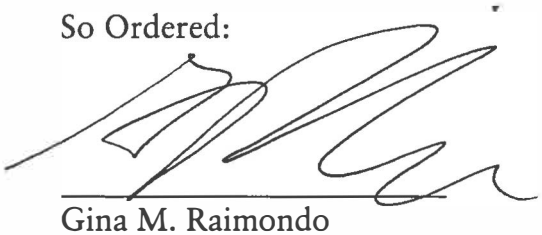
1. The statutory timeframes contained in R.I. Gen. Laws §§ 17-12.1-1 and 17-12.1-8 for holding the Primary are hereby suspended.

2. The Board may take all reasonable and necessary steps to hold the Primary on June 2, 2020.

3. The Board, working in conjunction with the Secretary of State, shall determine a plan to hold a predominantly mail ballot Primary. The Rhode Island Department of Health shall advise the Board on any public health concerns that may arise with respect to voting practices involving person-to-person contact.

This Order shall take effect immediately and remain in full force and effect until April 22, 2020, to be renewed or modified as necessary and appropriate to carry out the purpose of this Order.

So Ordered:



Gina M. Raimondo
Governor