



**RHODE ISLAND KIDS COUNT**  
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**Comments Re:** Rules and Regulations Establishing  
Vote-By-Mail Ballot Drop Boxes  
**Rhode Island Board of Elections**  
**August 11, 2022**  
**Leanne Barrett, Senior Policy Analyst**



Rhode Island KIDS COUNT coordinates the Right from the Start Campaign, a state policy coalition led by eight organizations to advance state policies and budget priorities that will help families with young children.

**Both Rhode Island KIDS COUNT and the Right from the Start Campaign supported passage of the Let RI Vote Act and strongly recommend that the RI Board of Elections require ballot drop boxes at all polling locations on election days.**

Parents of young children face real barriers in participating in elections because of the significant caregiving and parenting responsibilities they have which are layered on top of working long hours to earn a living, shop for food, prepare meals, help older children with schoolwork, etc. A recent study found that breastfeeding alone requires at least 1,800 hours per year of a mother's time! Many families also have difficulty with transportation.

The Let RI Vote Act allows people to easily vote-by-mail and that will make a big difference in helping parents get their votes counted assuming they request a ballot and get it completed and mailed on time.

We are concerned that many people wait until the last minute and will not have their votes counted because they miss the deadline to mail in their ballot and assume they can drop off their ballot at a neighborhood polling location during the extended hours that are available on election days.

We thank you for considering adding the requirement to have drop boxes at all polling locations into the RI Board of Elections rules and regulations. The more people who get to participate in elections, the more likely policymakers will make decisions that respond to the needs of the people, including the needs of our children.