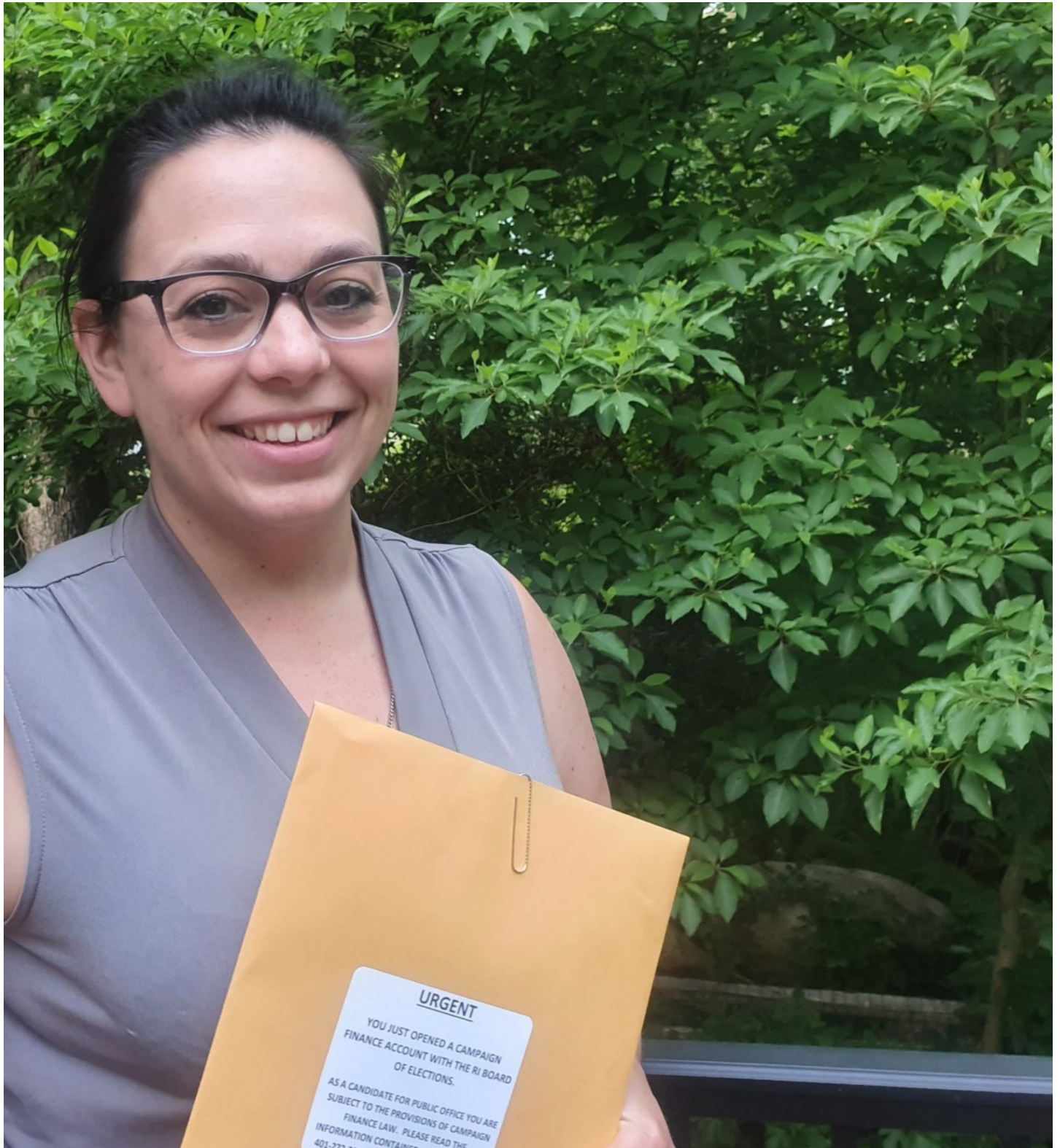


Rhode Island State Representative Megan Cotter Proposes New Law to Regulate Self-Checkout at Grocery Stores



Providence, Rhode Island Jul 16, 2023 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - Rhode Island State Representative Megan L. Cotter has introduced legislation aimed at establishing limits on self-checkout lanes in grocery

stores throughout the state. The bill, designed to spark a conversation about the increasing use of self-checkouts to reduce cashier employment, seeks to address the concerns of both consumers and workers.

Representative Cotter, a Democrat representing District 39, which includes Exeter, Hopkinton, and Richmond, believes that self-checkouts not only frustrate and inconvenience shoppers but also raise significant job-related issues. Large corporations that own grocery chains utilize self-checkouts as a means to decrease the number of employees and the hours they work. Representative Cotter aims to provide Rhode Islanders with a platform to voice their concerns and ensure that these corporations hear their opinions.

The proposed legislation numbered 2023-H 5161, includes several key provisions. Firstly, it restricts grocery stores from operating more than eight self-checkouts simultaneously. Additionally, it mandates that grocery stores maintain a minimum of one staffed checkout for every self-checkout. The legislation also introduces a unique incentive, requiring grocery stores to offer customers a 10% discount on their purchases when they check out their groceries themselves, provided the order consists of ten or more items.

"Self-checkout is a way grocery stores are avoiding paying employees by getting customers to do cashiers' jobs for free. It seems only fair that if they are going to take on cashiers' work, the customer should get something in return," Representative Cotter stated.

The legislation not only addresses the impact of self-checkouts on employment but also highlights their negative effects on the community. It emphasizes that the increased use of self-checkouts isolates the elderly, who often struggle with technology and benefit from social interaction with cashiers. Moreover, the proliferation of self-checkouts has led grocery stores to rely more heavily on part-time employees, who typically receive lower wages and limited access to benefits. This practice disproportionately affects people of color, who are overrepresented in cashier positions, typically the lowest-paid roles in retail businesses.

Representative Cotter recognizes that the legislation may undergo modifications as it progresses but views it as a starting point for an important public discussion.

"While many people use self-checkout regularly, there are also many people who want the advantages of checking out with a real human being. I look forward to hearings on this bill so people have a chance to speak up for their preferences and for jobs," Representative Cotter commented.

<https://youtu.be/o3XTt5l8bOw>

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