



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations  
Department of State | Office of the Secretary of State  
Nellie M. Gorbea, Secretary of State

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Secretary Gorbea Announces Remote Online Notarization To Enable Business to Continue During COVID-19 Emergency**

**Providence, RI** – Today, Secretary of State Nellie M. Gorbea announced an agreement with Governor Gina Raimondo that enables Remote Online Notarization to be permitted on a temporary basis. Remote Online Notarization will allow individuals to honor social distancing guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention during the COVID-19 pandemic during business transactions requiring a notary public.

Remote Online Notarization is the process by which documents are notarized in an electronic form and the signer and notary public are not physically in each other's presence. During the notarization process, the parties are able to communicate simultaneously using secure audio-video technology.

"Over the past several weeks, I have been hearing from Rhode Islanders and their attorneys, bankers and realtors that they need to be able to execute documents in a safe and secure way. Government must work for people," said Secretary Gorbea. "Remote Online Notarization will allow both notaries and their customers to stay at home while properly executing important legal documents. I thank Governor Raimondo and her legal team for working with us to develop this solution."

A notary public is an official of integrity commissioned to a four-year term by the Governor to serve the public as an impartial witness to the identity, comprehension and intent of a person requesting a notarial act. Common documents requiring notarization include wills, real estate transactions, lending applications, and professional licenses.

"It's incredibly important for lawyers to continue to help people with major life events like real estate transactions and estate planning in this difficult time," said David Bazar, President of the Rhode Island Bar Association. "I thank the offices of Secretary Gorbea and Governor Raimondo for working with the Rhode Island Bar Association to find a safe and secure alternative to the notary process."

"Our membership is grateful to Governor Raimondo and Secretary Gorbea for working with our association to make remote notarization a reality during this challenging time," said David Salvatore, Government Affairs Director for the Rhode Island Association of Realtors. "Providing for remote notarization is a critical step in the right direction that will provide homebuyers and sellers with the comfort of knowing their transactions will be completed, while adhering to the state's social distancing policy."

Temporary Remote Online Notarization is effective April 3, 2020, until the termination of Rhode Island's state of emergency. A [step-by-step guide](#) to the Remote Online Notarization process is available on Secretary Gorbea's new streamlined Business Services website.

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