2015 -- S 1027

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2015

SENATE RESOLUTION

CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY THE COSTS, BENEFITS, AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A STATEWIDE TEACHER CONTRACT IN RHODE ISLAND

Introduced By: Senators Paiva Weed, Gallo, Ruggerio, and Goodwin

Date Introduced: June 25, 2015

Referred To: Placed on the Senate Consent Calendar

WHEREAS, Public education is a priority for Rhode Island's families, communities, educators, and lawmakers. Each year, supporters of K-12 schools passionately advocate for the resources that are needed to ensure that every learner receives the instruction and opportunities that will allow them to flourish; and

WHEREAS, Classroom teachers remain the most important school-based factor contributing to students' academic success. Because of the central role that teachers play in supporting student achievement, school districts in Rhode Island invest considerable time developing and negotiating contracts that strive to put into place the conditions that promote teacher excellence, satisfaction, and growth; and

WHEREAS, Under Rhode Island General Law, local school districts must engage in teacher contract negotiations every three years, a process that involves the active participation of superintendents, business officers, teacher representatives, and teacher union personnel, as well as elected and appointed members of local school committees. The time that is spent on teacher contracts means that these talented professionals have less time to devote to the important tasks of overseeing district policy, operating schools, and attending to student learning; and

WHEREAS, Rhode Island statutes contain provisions that create challenges to the most effective placement of teachers, including limiting the ease of movement from one district to another, or sharing resources, where certain skills may be needed; and

WHEREAS, As the smallest state in the nation, Rhode Island may benefit from having
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WHEREAS, As the smallest state in the nation, Rhode Island may benefit from having
benefits, incentives, and work conditions in school districts in Rhode Island, regionally, and
nationwide;

(4) Identify the particular and total potential costs and benefits that would be incurred
with a single statewide teacher contract using different assumptions and models;

(5) Identify the components that would be most practicable to include in a statewide
teacher contract;

(6) Identify statutory and regulatory changes that would have to take place to allow a
statewide teacher contract; and

(7) Identify a transition process that would allow all school districts in Rhode Island to
migrate to a statewide contract within a six (6) year period.

Forthwith upon passage of this resolution, the members of the commission shall meet at
the call of the President of the Senate who shall designate the Chair and Vice Chair.

Vacancies in said commission shall be filled in the same manner as the original
appointment. A member of the public may be appointed in the place of a Senator. A simple
majority shall constitute a quorum.

The membership of said commission shall receive no compensation for their services.

All departments and agencies of the state shall furnish such advice and information,
documentary and otherwise, to said commission and its agents as is deemed necessary or
desirable by the commission to facilitate the purposes of this resolution; and be it further
RESOLVED, That the commission shall report its findings and recommendations to the
President of the Senate on or before February 1, 2016, and said commission shall expire on
March 31, 2016.
This resolution would create an eleven (11) member special legislative commission whose purpose it would be to study the costs, benefits, and implementation of a statewide teacher contract in Rhode Island, and who would report back to the President of the Senate no later than February 1, 2016, and whose life would expire on March 31, 2016.