

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

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

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

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

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

19 WHEREAS, As the smallest state in the nation, Rhode Island may benefit from having

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18 another, or sharing resources, where certain skills may be needed; and

19 WHEREAS, As the smallest state in the nation, Rhode Island may benefit from having

1 benefits, incentives, and work conditions in school districts in Rhode Island, regionally, and  
2 nationwide;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

17 All departments and agencies of the state shall furnish such advice and information,  
18 documentary and otherwise, to said commission and its agents as is deemed necessary or  
19 desirable by the commission to facilitate the purposes of this resolution; and be it further

20 RESOLVED, That the commission shall report its findings and recommendations to the  
21 President of the Senate on or before February 1, 2016, and said commission shall expire on  
22 March 31, 2016.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

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- 1           This resolution would create an eleven (11) member special legislative commission  
2 whose purpose it would be to study the costs, benefits, and implementation of a statewide teacher  
3 contract in Rhode Island, and who would report back to the President of the Senate no later than  
4 February 1, 2016, and whose life would expire on March 31, 2016.

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