

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2023

SENATE RESOLUTION

CREATING A SPECIAL SENATE COMMISSION TO STUDY NON-PLURALITY VOTING
METHODS AND RUNOFF ELECTIONS FOR GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND GENERAL
OFFICER PRIMARIES

Introduced By: Senator Samuel D. Zurier

Date Introduced: January 30, 2023

Referred To: Placed on the Senate Consent Calendar

1 WHEREAS, Using non-plurality voting has the potential to expand the range of choices
2 available to voters and promote campaigns that are more positive and focused on issues; and

3 WHEREAS, The implementation of runoff elections would ensure that a winner of a
4 primary election won a majority of the votes in a given election, promoting majority support of a
5 candidate by the electorate; now, therefore be it

6 RESOLVED, That a special legislative commission be and the same is hereby created
7 consisting of seven (7) members: three (3) of whom shall be members of the Senate, not more
8 than two (2) from the same political party, to be appointed by the President of the Senate; one of
9 whom shall be a representative of the Board of Elections, to be appointed by the President of the
10 Senate; one of whom shall be the Secretary of State, or designee; and two (2) of whom shall be
11 representatives from a board of canvassers or election officials of two (2) different cities or towns
12 in the state, to be appointed by the President of the Senate.

13 All members of the study commission shall be registered voters of this state at the time of
14 their selection and at all times while they remain on the commission.

15 The purpose of said commission shall be to study the potential application of non-
16 plurality voting on elections for General Assembly and General Officer candidates, including, but
17 not limited to;

18 • Analyzing the current voting system and the requirements for implementing non-
19 plurality voting and runoff elections, including public education, voting equipment and

1 technology, ballot designs, and costs;

2 • Determining the level of public support for non-plurality voting and runoff elections;

3 • Reviewing the experience of other states in conducting elections using non-plurality
4 voting and runoff elections;

5 • Providing recommended changes in the law to implement non-plurality voting and
6 runoff elections; and

7 • Providing recommendations on making all voting systems used in the state compatible
8 with non-plurality voting, including a review of the availability and costs of necessary voting
9 equipment; study any other alternatives to single-ballot plurality voting the commission considers
10 relevant or useful.

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 appoint a Chair of the commission.

13 Vacancies in the commission shall be filled in like manner as the original appointment.

14 A quorum of the commission shall consist of a majority of its membership, and the
15 membership of the commission shall receive no compensation for their services.

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

19 The Joint Committee on Legislative Services is hereby authorized and directed to provide
20 suitable quarters for the commission; and be it further

21 RESOLVED, That the commission shall report its findings and recommendations to the
22 President of the Senate on or before October 31, 2023, and the commission shall expire on
23 December 31, 2023.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
SENATE RESOLUTION
CREATING A SPECIAL SENATE COMMISSION TO STUDY NON-PLURALITY VOTING
METHODS AND RUNOFF ELECTIONS FOR GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND GENERAL
OFFICER PRIMARIES

1 This resolution would create a seven (7) member commission to study non-plurality
2 voting and runoff elections for General Assembly and General Officer primaries, and would
3 report back to the President of the Senate on or before October 31, 2023, and would expire on
4 December 31, 2023.

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