

2024 -- H 7615

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2024

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JOINT RESOLUTION

CREATING A SPECIAL JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY STUDENT  
TRANSPORTATION NEEDS AND SYSTEM COSTS

Introduced By: Representatives Cortvriend, and McGaw

Date Introduced: February 15, 2024

Referred To: House Education

1           WHEREAS, Rhode Island General Law § 16-21.1-2. establishes school bus districts  
2 within the state to provide bus transportation in the interest of public safety, health, and welfare  
3 for pupils in grades kindergarten through twelve, or in special education programs who attend  
4 public schools, regional schools, and nonpublic nonprofit schools which are consolidated, or  
5 regionalized, and where said school bus districts originally established in 1977, are not  
6 contiguously aligned, resulting in increased transportation costs for many districts; and

7           WHEREAS, Rhode Island General Law § 16-21.1-8. mandates an out-of-district  
8 statewide school transportation system and requires a fee be paid to the Department of  
9 Elementary and Secondary Education, thus preventing school districts from exploring more cost-  
10 effective ways of providing transportation; and

11           WHEREAS, Staffing shortages in the Rhode Island public transit authority have caused  
12 students attending the Providence public schools to be absent from or late for school; now,  
13 therefore be it

14           RESOLVED, That a special legislative commission on Student Transportation Needs and  
15 System Costs be and the same is hereby created consisting of eleven (11) members: three (3) of  
16 whom shall be members of the House of Representatives, not more than two (2) from the same  
17 political party, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; three (3) of whom shall be members  
18 of the Senate, not more than two (2) from the same political party, to be appointed by the  
19 President of the Senate; one of whom shall be the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary

1 Education, or designee; one of whom shall be the President of the Rhode Island Association of  
2 School Committees, or designee, one of whom shall be the President of the Rhode Island School  
3 Superintendents Association, or designee; one of whom shall be the President of the Rhode Island  
4 PTA, or designee; and one of whom shall be the Chair of the Board of the Rhode Island Public  
5 Transit Authority, or designee.

6 In lieu of any appointment of a member of the legislature to a legislative study  
7 commission, or any commission created by a General Assembly resolution, the appointing  
8 authority may appoint a member of the general public to serve in lieu of a legislator; provided  
9 that, the majority leader or the minority leader of the political party which is entitled to the  
10 appointment consents to the appointment of the member of the general public.

11 The purpose of said commission shall be to make a comprehensive study to determine the  
12 transportation needs of students, the most cost-effective way of providing transportation services,  
13 and what changes, if any, need to be made in chapter 21.1 of title 16 of the Rhode Island General  
14 Laws.

15 Forthwith upon passage of this resolution, the members of the commission shall meet at  
16 the call of the Speaker of the House and President of the Senate and shall select, from among the  
17 legislators, co-chairpersons.

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

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

20 All departments and agencies of the State shall furnish such advice and information,  
21 documentary and otherwise, to said commission and its agents as is deemed necessary or  
22 desirable by the commission to facilitate the purposes of this resolution.

23 The Speaker of the House is hereby authorized and directed to provide suitable quarters  
24 for said commission; and be it further

25 RESOLVED, That the commission shall report its findings and recommendations to the  
26 General Assembly no later than January 5, 2025, and said commission shall expire on March 5,  
27 2025.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
JOINT RESOLUTION  
CREATING A SPECIAL JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY STUDENT  
TRANSPORTATION NEEDS AND SYSTEM COSTS

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1           This resolution would create an eleven (11) member special joint legislative commission  
2 whose purpose it would be to make a comprehensive study to determine the transportation needs  
3 of students and the most cost-effective way of providing transportation services, and what  
4 changes, if any, need to be made in chapter 21.1 of title 16 of the Rhode Island General Laws  
5 and which would report back to the General Assembly no later than January 5, 2025, and whose  
6 life would expire on March 5, 2025.

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