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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

JOINT RESOLUTION

CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY AND PROVIDE
RECOMMENDATIONS TO SAFEGUARD RHODE ISLAND AGAINST THE USE OF
NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Introduced By: Senator Tiara T. Mack

Date Introduced: March 14, 2025

Referred To: Senate Special Legislation and Veterans Affairs

1 RESOLVED, That a special legislative commission be and the same is hereby created
2 consisting of eleven (11) members, all of whom shall be United States citizens who are residents
3 of Rhode Island, and who credibly reflect the makeup of the State's population with respect to
4 gender, cultural, and ancestry background and who shall have publicly applied for membership
5 on the commission; one of whom shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House; one of whom
6 shall be appointed by the President of the Senate; one of whom shall be appointed by the RI
7 Attorney General; and eight (8) of whom shall be appointed by the Secretary of State in
8 consultation with the Governor.

9 The application to serve on the special commission shall include:

- 10 • The intent of the applicant to advance the investigation established by this
11 Resolution;
- 12 • The city or town in which the applicant resides;
- 13 • The employment or retirement status of the applicant; and
- 14 • The applicant's interest in serving on the commission and their view of why they
15 might make an important contribution to the work of the commission.

16 The Secretary of State shall post the appointment opportunity on the official website of
17 the State within thirty (30) days of the passage of this Resolution, and all applications for service
18 on the commission shall be submitted within thirty (30) days of the posting of the appointment
19 opportunity. All appointments to the commission shall be made no sooner than ninety (90) days,

1 nor later than one hundred twenty (120) days after the passage of this Resolution.

2 The purpose of said commission shall be to investigate and report on what measures may
3 be necessary and appropriate to protect the environment, wildlife, culture, and population of
4 Rhode Island from the existential threat posed by nuclear weapons and to contribute toward the
5 total elimination of these weapons under multi-lateral negotiation per the auspices of the 1970
6 Non-Proliferation Treaty; the 2010 New Start Treaty; and the 2021 Treaty on the Prohibition of
7 Nuclear Weapons as provided for in Article 4 of said treaty. Topics to be addressed by the
8 commission shall include, but not be limited to, the harms posed to Rhode Island by nuclear
9 weapons such as:

- 10 • Physical destruction from explosions, fire, and radioactive contamination;
- 11 • Infrastructure collapse including roads, bridges, electricity, and
12 telecommunication;
- 13 • Disruption of essential services such as food and fuel supply, financial systems,
14 healthcare services, and housing;
- 15 • Environmental devastation, including the loss of natural resources, ecosystems,
16 and biodiversity;
- 17 • Severe harm to the physical and mental well-being of Rhode Island residents;
- 18 • Severe disruptions to Rhode Island from a nuclear attack on a nearby state or city
19 (i.e. NYC or Boston) including radiation poisoning to organisms and water supplies, electrical
20 blackouts; and
- 21 • Food supply interruption, and any other matters the commission deems
22 appropriate.

23 The commission's deliberations shall also touch on the probable inability of preventing
24 the single, first use of a nuclear weapon from escalating into full-scale nuclear war; and the
25 scientifically validated danger of a years-long "nuclear winter" which would follow such a war
26 and would limit the growth of crops and lead to widespread human starvation.

27 The commission shall also investigate measures and make recommendations to the
28 government and people of Rhode Island including, but not be limited to, financial, legislative, or
29 legal measures to assist or encourage transition from nuclear weapons-related employment and
30 commercial activities within the State to jobs and activities that instead address the climate crisis
31 and other pressing social needs such as health care, housing, education, and elimination of
32 poverty and discrimination.

33 No later than thirty (30) days after the appointment of the final member of the
34 commission, the members shall meet and organize and shall elect co-chairpersons by majority

1 vote. The commission shall use procedures and decision-making per the currently in force rules
2 of the Senate. The commission's proceedings, meetings, and activities shall be subject to the Open
3 Meetings law of the State of Rhode Island.

4 The commission shall meet on a regular basis to research, gather evidence, and hear
5 testimony and advice in the manner that the members of the commission determine is the most
6 suitable for achieving its purpose. The commission shall hold at least five (5) public hearings
7 across the State to gather public input and inform citizens and legislators about the humanitarian
8 and environmental consequences of nuclear weapons use. These hearings shall address the
9 potential impact of a nuclear explosion on Providence or Quonset Point, including direct
10 destruction, radioactive fallout downwind, and long-term contamination. They shall also examine
11 any potential diplomatic breakthroughs such as entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of
12 Nuclear Weapons or other international diplomatic agreements aimed at reducing the threat of
13 nuclear war. The topics of employment, technologies, and industries within the State devoted to
14 both nuclear weapons and climate change shall be addressed.

15 All members of the Rhode Island public shall be given a reasonable opportunity to offer
16 their views and ideas related to the subjects under examination by the commission.

17 If vacancies occur in the commission, the Secretary of State shall fill them after accepting
18 applications as in the original appointments.

19 The members of the special commission shall receive no compensation for their services.

20 The commission shall use State-owned public halls for the hearing venues without
21 necessity of payments.

22 All departments and agencies of the State shall furnish such advice and information,
23 documentary and otherwise, to the commission and its agents as is deemed necessary by the
24 commission to facilitate the purpose of this resolution.

25 The Joint Committee on Legislative Services is hereby authorized and directed to provide
26 suitable quarters for said commission; and be it further

27 RESOLVED, That the commission shall report its findings and, if applicable, drafts of
28 legislation to implement them, to the General Assembly, Governor, Lieutenant Governor,
29 Secretary of State, Attorney General, and all members of the Rhode Island Congressional
30 Delegation, as well as to the press and the general public, no later than August 6, 2026; and said
31 commission shall expire on November 6, 2026.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

J O I N T R E S O L U T I O N

CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY AND PROVIDE
RECOMMENDATIONS TO SAFEGUARD RHODE ISLAND AGAINST THE USE OF
NUCLEAR WEAPONS

- 1 This resolution would create an eleven (11) member special legislative study commission
- 2 whose purpose it would be to study and provide recommendations to safeguard Rhode Island
- 3 against use of nuclear weapons, and who would report back no later than August 6, 2026, and
- 4 whose life would expire on November 6, 2026.

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