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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

JOINT RESOLUTION

CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY SAFE STAFFING
RATIOS IN HOSPITALS

Introduced By: Representatives Fellela, Messier, Hull, Hopkins, and Serpa

Date Introduced: January 09, 2026

Referred To: House Health & Human Services

1 RESOLVED, That a special legislative commission be and the same is hereby created
2 consisting of fifteen (15) members: three (3) of whom shall be members of the Rhode Island
3 House of Representatives, not more than two (2) from the same political party, to be appointed by
4 the Speaker of the House; three (3) of whom shall be members of the Rhode Island Senate, not
5 more than two (2) from the same political party, to be appointed by the President of the Senate;
6 two (2) of whom shall be representatives of hospital direct care staff, one of which shall be from a
7 specialty hospital (such as psychiatric, rehabilitation, of birthing), with one to be appointed by the
8 Speaker of the House, and one of whom to be appointed by the President of the Senate; two (2) of
9 whom shall be hospital administrators, one of whom to be appointed by the Speaker of the
10 House, and one of whom to be appointed by the President of the Senate; one of whom shall be the
11 Director of the Rhode Island Department of Health, or designee; one of whom shall be the Rhode
12 Island Attorney General, or designee; one of whom shall be a representative from a patient
13 advocacy organization, to be appointed jointly by the Speaker of the House and the President of
14 the Senate; and two (2) of whom shall be representatives of labor unions representing hospital
15 workers, one of whom to be appointed by the Speaker of the House, and one of whom to be
16 appointed by the President of the Senate.

17 In lieu of any appointment of a member of the legislature to a legislative study
18 commission, the appointing authority may appoint a member of the general public to serve in lieu
19 of a legislator.

1 The purpose of said commission shall be to make a comprehensive study and provide
2 recommendations to the General Assembly regarding safe staffing ratios in hospitals, including,
3 but not limited to:

- 4 • The impact of staffing levels on patient outcomes and safety;
- 5 • The effect of staffing ratios on workforce recruitment and retention;
- 6 • The financial and operational implications for hospitals and the state;
- 7 • A review of best practices and models from other states; and
- 8 • An evaluation of how Rhode Island hospitals are implementing new national
9 staffing standards, including the Joint Commission's 2026 National Performance Goal on nurse
10 staffing, and whether additional state-level policies or oversight mechanisms are needed to ensure
11 compliance, patient safety, and workforce stability.

12 Forthwith upon passage of this resolution, the members of the commission shall meet at
13 the call of the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate, and organize and shall select
14 a chairperson and vice-chairperson, one of whom shall be a member of the House and one of
15 whom shall be a member of the Senate.

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

17 The membership of said commission shall receive no compensation for their services or
18 reimbursement for expenses.

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

22 The Joint Committee on Legislative Services is hereby authorized and directed to provide
23 suitable quarters, staff and clerical support for said commission; and be it further

24 RESOLVED, That the commission shall report its progress quarterly to the General
25 Assembly beginning on September 1, 2026, and shall submit a final report with findings and
26 recommendations to the General Assembly no later than September 1, 2027, and said commission
27 shall expire on January 30, 2028.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
JOINT RESOLUTION
CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY SAFE STAFFING
RATIOS IN HOSPITALS

- 1 This resolution would create a fifteen (15) member special joint legislative study
2 commission whose purpose would be to make a comprehensive study and provide
3 recommendations to the General Assembly regarding safe staffing ratios in hospitals, and
4 who would report back to the General Assembly on or before September 1, 2027, and
5 whose life would expire on January 30, 2028.

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