

2026 -- H 7974

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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 AND PROVIDE
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CREATION OF A STATEWIDE TEACHER
HEALTHCARE PLAN

Introduced By: Representatives Shallcross Smith, Cruz, Casimiro, and Fellela

Date Introduced: February 27, 2026

Referred To: House Labor

1 WHEREAS, Public school teachers are essential to the educational, economic, and civil
2 wellbeing of the State of Rhode Island; and

3 WHEREAS, Access to affordable, quality healthcare is a critical component of recruiting,
4 retaining, and supporting a stable and effective workforce; and

5 WHEREAS, Public school teacher health insurance coverage in Rhode Island is currently
6 negotiated and administered on a district-by-district basis, resulting in significant disparities in
7 coverage, cost-sharing, and access to care across municipalities; and

8 WHEREAS, A statewide healthcare plan for public school teachers in Rhode Island may
9 offer opportunities to leverage economies of scale, standardize baseline benefits, promote equity
10 among educators regardless of district, and provide greater predictability in education and
11 municipal budgeting; now, therefore be it

12 RESOLVED, That a special legislative commission be and the same is hereby created
13 consisting of eleven (11) members: two (2) of whom shall be members of the Rhode Island House
14 of Representatives, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; two (2) of whom shall be
15 members of the Rhode Island Senate, to be appointed by the President of the Senate; one of
16 whom shall be the Commissioner of the Rhode Island Department of Education, or designee; one
17 of whom shall be the Executive Director of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, or
18 designee; one of whom shall be a municipal official, to be appointed by the President of the
19 Senate; one of whom shall be the Executive Director of the Rhode Island School Superintendents

1 Association, or designee; one of whom shall be the President of the Rhode Island AFL-CIO, or
2 designee; and two (2) of whom shall be representatives of labor unions representing public school
3 teachers, one of whom to be appointed by the Executive Director of the National Education
4 Association of Rhode Island, and one of whom to be appointed by the President of the Rhode
5 Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals.

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

9 The purpose of said commission shall be to make a comprehensive study and provide
10 recommendations to the General Assembly regarding the creation of a statewide teacher
11 healthcare plan including, but not limited to:

- 12 ● The current structure of public school teacher health insurance coverage in Rhode
13 Island, including costs, benefits, and administrative arrangements across school districts;
- 14 ● A review of best practices and models from other states;
- 15 ● Potential cost savings and efficiencies associated with a statewide plan, including
16 impacts on state and municipal budgets;
- 17 ● The effects of a statewide plan on healthcare access, quality, and affordability;
- 18 ● Implications for collective bargaining rights and existing collective bargaining
19 agreements;
- 20 ● The effect of healthcare premiums, out-of-pocket costs, and quality of coverage on
21 workforce recruitment and retention;
- 22 ● The financial and operational implications for municipalities; and
- 23 ● An evaluation of any statutory or constitutional changes that may be required to
24 implement a statewide teacher healthcare plan.

25 Forthwith upon passage of this resolution, the members of the commission shall meet at
26 the call of the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate and organize and shall select
27 a chairperson and vice-chairperson, one of whom shall be a member of the House and one of
28 whom shall be a member of the Senate.

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

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

32 All departments and agencies of the state, municipalities, school districts, and other
33 relevant stakeholders shall furnish such advice and information, documentary and otherwise, to
34 said commission and its agents as is deemed necessary or desirable by the commission to

1 facilitate the purpose of this resolution.

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

4 RESOLVED, That the commission shall report its progress quarterly to the General
5 Assembly beginning on September 1, 2026, and shall submit a final report with findings and
6 recommendations to the General Assembly on or before September 1, 2027, and said commission
7 shall expire on December 31, 2027.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
JOINT RESOLUTION
CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY AND PROVIDE
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CREATION OF A STATEWIDE TEACHER
HEALTHCARE PLAN

1 This resolution would create an eleven (11) member special legislative commission to
2 study and provide recommendations for the creation of a statewide teacher healthcare plan, and
3 who would report its progress quarterly to the General Assembly beginning on September 1,
4 2026, and would submit a final report to the General Assembly on or before September 1, 2027,
5 and would expire on December 31, 2027.

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