

**2026 -- H 8345 SUBSTITUTE A**

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LC005716/SUB A  
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**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND**

**IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026**

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**H O U S E R E S O L U T I O N**

**CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY THE USE AND  
IMPACT OF DIGITAL AND ELECTRONIC TECHNOLOGY IN PUBLIC EDUCATION AND  
ON MENTAL HEALTH**

Introduced By: Representatives Caldwell, Cotter, and Spears

Date Introduced: March 25, 2026

Referred To: House Education

1           WHEREAS, The use of digital and electronic technology in public education has  
2 increased significantly over the past decade; and

3           WHEREAS, This increased use has taken place in areas that rely on digital and electronic  
4 technology, and the extent or depth to which teachers, students, and parents/responsible adults are  
5 learning and interacting with this technology has also increased; and

6           WHEREAS, Along with the increased breadth and depth of use of digital and electronic  
7 technology, there has been even greater advancements, enhancements and updates to this  
8 technology, which in many ways outpaces the ability of schools to fully vet, review, and analyze  
9 these changes, and for parents/responsible adults to be aware of the technologies their children  
10 are accessing and utilizing; and

11           WHEREAS, The increased use of this technology has impacted the way classes are  
12 taught, the way students learn, and the way schools are administered; and

13           WHEREAS, While this increased use of such items as third-party digital platform  
14 technologies, social media, and the machine learning commonly referred to as “Artificial  
15 Intelligence” potentially give third-party vendors and providers, social media content creators,  
16 and others who operate in “cyberspace” great influence in the way education is delivered in  
17 Rhode Island and the way children learn, there has been little study of the impact and changes the  
18 use of these platforms and technologies might have on public education in Rhode Island; and

19           WHEREAS, These same concerns about the use of technology and its possible effects on

1 children in education can also arise as an issue in mental health care, particularly on persons who  
2 may be in a vulnerable position; now, therefore be it

3         RESOLVED, That a special legislative commission to study the use and impact of digital  
4 and electronic technology in public education and on mental health is hereby created consisting of  
5 fourteen (14) members:

6         Four (4) of whom shall be members of the House of Representatives, not more than three  
7 (3) from the same political party, of whom three (3) shall be appointed by the Speaker of the  
8 House and one of whom shall be appointed by the Minority Leader; one of whom shall be the  
9 Rhode Island Attorney General, or designee; one of whom shall be a member of the State Police  
10 computer crimes unit, appointed by the Superintendent of the Rhode Island State Police; one of  
11 whom shall be the Director of the Rhode Island Foundation, or designee; two (2) of whom shall  
12 be public school teachers, one currently teaching in a municipality with a population greater than  
13 eighty thousand (80,000) persons and one currently teaching in a municipality with a population  
14 of less than eighty thousand (80,000) persons, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; one  
15 of whom shall be the President of the Rhode Island Association of School Principals, or designee;  
16 one of whom shall be an expert in children’s behavioral health, to be appointed by the Speaker of  
17 the House; one of whom shall be an expert in digital media, to be appointed by the Speaker of the  
18 House; one of whom shall be a parent of a child currently enrolled in a public school in Rhode  
19 Island, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; and one of whom shall be the President of  
20 the Rhode Island Society for Technology in Education, or designee.

21         The purpose of said commission shall be to undertake a comprehensive study of the  
22 following:

23         (1) The use and impact of third-party digital platforms in Rhode Island public education  
24 including, but not limited to, the use of these platforms, and the ways that these platforms could  
25 be used more effectively, as well as potential harms from the use of these platforms and ways to  
26 mitigate those harms;

27         (2) Exploring options to provide protections to children using online platforms, including  
28 those involving financial transactions on gaming and social media sites;

29         (3) The use and availability of age-appropriate school digital content, and exploring ways  
30 to ensure the use of safe software in schools, with a special emphasis on technologies which have  
31 addictive design elements, provide exposure to inappropriate conduct, or incorporate predatory  
32 data collection;

33         (4) Ways and best practices to ensure creators of online services, products, or features  
34 that children are likely to access, shall consider the best interests of children when designing and

1 developing such online services, products, or features;

2 (5) The use of artificial intelligence in mental healthcare treatments, and the need for  
3 regulation thereof;

4 (6) The use of artificial intelligence companion technology and its potential impact on  
5 suicidal ideation, physical harm, or financial harm; and

6 (7) Additional issue raised by and when a minor is an account holder on a social media  
7 platform.

8 The study commission shall consult with other individuals who have relevant expertise as  
9 needed.

10 Forthwith upon passage of this resolution, the members of the commission shall meet at  
11 the call of the Speaker of the House and shall select, from among the legislators, a chairperson.

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

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

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

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

19 RESOLVED, That the commission shall report its findings and recommendations to the  
20 Education Committee of the House of Representatives no later than April 23, 2027, and said  
21 commission shall expire on May 28, 2027.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
HOUSE RESOLUTION  
CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY THE USE AND  
IMPACT OF DIGITAL AND ELECTRONIC TECHNOLOGY IN PUBLIC EDUCATION AND  
ON MENTAL HEALTH

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1           This resolution would create a fourteen (14) member special legislative study  
2 commission to study the use and impact of digital and electronic technology in public education  
3 and on mental health, and would report its findings and recommendations to the education  
4 committee of the House of Representatives no later than April 23, 2027, and said commission  
5 would expire on May 28, 2027.

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