

**2026 -- H 8610**

=====  
LC006559  
=====

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND**

**IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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

---

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

**CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY THE  
ESTABLISHMENT OF AN OFFICE OF THE ELDER ADVOCATE**

Introduced By: Representatives Shallcross Smith, Serpa, Read, Fellela, Casimiro,  
Handy, J. Lombardi, Casey, Hull, and Fogarty

Date Introduced: June 03, 2026

Referred To: House State Government & Elections

1           WHEREAS, More than 240,000 Rhode Island residents are age sixty (60) years or older,  
2           and that number is projected to continue to grow significantly in the coming years, increasing the  
3           demand for coordinated, accessible, and effective advocacy and services for older adults; and

4           WHEREAS, Older adults in Rhode Island encounter issues involving age discrimination,  
5           financial exploitation, housing, access to benefits, guardianship, health care, and other service  
6           gaps that may not be fully addressed through existing systems; and

7           WHEREAS, The General Assembly finds that it is in the public interest to study the  
8           need, feasibility, and operational requirements for establishing an Office of the Elder Advocate to  
9           promote and protect the rights, dignity, and well-being of older adults in Rhode Island; now,  
10          therefore be it

11          RESOLVED, That a special legislative commission be and the same is hereby created  
12          consisting of thirteen (13) members, including members and/or designees with legal, government,  
13          and consumer backgrounds, to study the need for the establishment of an Office of the Elder  
14          Advocate in Rhode Island, as follows:

15          Three (3) of whom shall be members of the Rhode Island House of Representatives, not  
16          more than two (2) from the same political party, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; one  
17          of whom shall be a representative from the Rhode Island Bar Association with experience in elder  
18          law, guardianship, or related legal matters, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; one of  
19          whom shall be the Dean of the Roger Williams University School of Law, or designee; one of

1 whom shall be a representative of the RI Office of Attorney General with experience in consumer  
2 protection, disability rights or Medicaid/ Medicare fraud issues, to be appointed by the Attorney  
3 General; one of whom shall be the Executive Director of the RI Chapter of the AARP, or  
4 designee; one of whom shall be the Executive Director of the Senior Agenda Coalition of RI, or  
5 designee; one of whom shall be the RI Long-Term Care Ombudsman, or designee; one of whom  
6 shall be a representative of a long-term care or aging services provider, to be appointed by the  
7 Speaker of the House; two (2) of whom shall be Rhode Island residents age sixty (60) years or  
8 older, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; and one of whom shall be a representative of  
9 the RI League of Cities and Towns, or designee.

10 In lieu of any appointment of a member of the legislature to a commission created by this  
11 resolution, the appointing authority may appoint a member of the general public to serve in lieu  
12 of a legislator.

13 The purpose of said commission shall be to make a comprehensive study and provide  
14 recommendations regarding the need, feasibility, structure, powers, funding, staffing, and  
15 statutory framework for the establishment of an Office of the Elder Advocate including, but not  
16 limited to:

17 Examining the scope of unmet needs for legal assistance of older adults in Rhode Island;

18 Reviewing existing state, federal, and local advocacy and complaint-resolution systems  
19 serving older adults;

20 Guardianship and probate issues;

21 Assessing existing state agencies authority, autonomy, capacity, and independence to  
22 address systemic legal concerns affecting older adults;

23 Recommending the appropriate duties, powers, jurisdiction, staffing, reporting  
24 requirements and resource needs of an Office of the Elder Advocate;

25 Examine by models from other states/territories or jurisdictions; and

26 Provide by recommendations regarding legislation necessary to establish the Office, if  
27 appropriate.

28 Forthwith upon passage of this resolution, the members of the commission shall meet at  
29 the call of the Speaker of the House and organize and elect a chairperson from among the  
30 legislative members. Vacancies in said commission shall be filled in like manner as the original  
31 appointment. The membership of said commission shall receive no compensation for their  
32 services.

33 All departments and agencies of the state shall furnish such advice and information,  
34 documentary and otherwise, to said commission and its agents as is deemed necessary or

1 desirable by the commission to facilitate the purposes of this resolution.

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

4           RESOLVED, That the commission shall report its findings and recommendations to the  
5 House of Representatives no later than March 15, 2027, and said commission shall expire on June  
6 15, 2027.

=====  
LC006559  
=====

EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
HOUSE RESOLUTION  
CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY THE  
ESTABLISHMENT OF AN OFFICE OF THE ELDER ADVOCATE

\*\*\*

1           This resolution would create a special legislative commission to study and provide  
2    recommendations relating to the establishment of an office of the elder advocate. The commission  
3    would report its findings and recommendations to the House of Representatives by March 15,  
4    2027, and would expire on June 15, 2027.

=====  
LC006559  
=====