

2026 -- S 3264

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

JOINT RESOLUTION

REPEALING RHODE ISLAND'S RATIFICATION OF THE CORWIN AMENDMENT

Introduced By: Senators Britto, Kallman, Acosta, Vargas, Tikoian, Murray, and Zurier

Date Introduced: May 05, 2026

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

1 WHEREAS, On February 27, 1861, in an attempt to avert the secession of Southern
2 states, U.S. Representative Thomas Corwin of Ohio proposed an amendment to the United States
3 Constitution that would prohibit the United States Constitution from being amended in a manner
4 that authorizes Congress to abolish or interfere with the states' domestic institutions, including
5 slavery (hereinafter the "Corwin Amendment"); and

6 WHEREAS, On March 2, 1861, the Corwin Amendment was approved by a joint
7 resolution of the Thirty-Sixth United States Congress (12 Stat. 251) and was submitted to the
8 states under Article V of the United States Constitution for ratification with no deadline given for
9 completion of its ratification; and

10 WHEREAS, The Rhode Island General Assembly ratified the Corwin Amendment on
11 May 31, 1861, with the enactment of the May 1861, Resolution No. 4; and

12 WHEREAS, The Corwin Amendment has not yet been ratified by three-fourths of the
13 states and, therefore, is not part of the United States Constitution; and

14 WHEREAS, It is still possible that a sufficient number of states could belatedly ratify the
15 Corwin Amendment thereby adding it to the United States Constitution, as occurred with the 27th
16 Amendment to the United States Constitution, which was first proposed in 1789 and was not
17 ratified by a sufficient number of states until 1992; and

18 WHEREAS, With the end of the Civil War and the ratification of the 13th Amendment to
19 the United States Constitution, the purposes of the Corwin Amendment have become moot; and
20 therefore, be it

1 RESOLVED, By the General Assembly of the State of Rhode Island, that the State of
2 Rhode Island hereby rescinds its ratification of the following proposition, known as the Corwin
3 Amendment to the United States Constitution:

4 "ARTICLE XIII. No amendment shall be made to the Constitution which will authorize
5 or give to Congress the power to abolish or interfere, within any State, with the domestic
6 institutions thereof, including that of persons held to labor or service by the laws of said State.";
7 and be it further

8 RESOLVED, That a certified copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Archivist of the
9 United States, the President of the United States, the President and Secretary of the United States
10 Senate, the Speaker and Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, and each member
11 of the Rhode Island congressional delegation with the request that it be printed verbatim in the
12 Congressional Record.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
JOINT RESOLUTION
REPEALING RHODE ISLAND'S RATIFICATION OF THE CORWIN AMENDMENT

- 1 This Joint Resolution would repeal the General Assembly's previous ratification of the
- 2 Corwin Amendment, a proposed amendment to the Constitution of the United States that would
- 3 prohibit the United States Constitution from being amended in a manner that would authorize
- 4 Congress to abolish or interfere with the states' domestic institutions, including slavery.

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