

2024 -- H 7615 SUBSTITUTE A

LC005072/SUB A/2

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2024

J O I N T R E S O L U T I O N

**CREATING A SPECIAL JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY STUDENT
TRANSPORTATION NEEDS AND SYSTEM COSTS**

Introduced By: Representatives Cortvriend, and McGaw

Date Introduced: February 15, 2024

Referred To: House Education

1 WHEREAS, Rhode Island General Law § 16-21.1-2. establishes school bus districts
2 within the state to provide bus transportation in the interest of public safety, health, and welfare
3 for pupils in grades kindergarten through twelve, or in special education programs who attend
4 public schools, regional schools, and nonpublic nonprofit schools which are consolidated, or
5 regionalized, and where said school bus districts originally established in 1977, are not
6 contiguously aligned, resulting in increased transportation costs for many districts; and

7 WHEREAS, Rhode Island General Law § 16-21.1-8. mandates an out-of-district
8 statewide school transportation system and requires a fee be paid to the Department of
9 Elementary and Secondary Education, thus preventing school districts from exploring more cost-
10 effective ways of providing transportation; and

11 WHEREAS, Staffing shortages in the Rhode Island public transit authority have caused
12 students attending the Providence public schools to be absent from or late for school; now,
13 therefore be it

14 RESOLVED, That a special legislative commission on Student Transportation Needs and
15 System Costs be and the same is hereby created consisting of thirteen (13) members: three (3) of
16 whom shall be members of the House of Representatives, not more than two (2) from the same
17 political party, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; three (3) of whom shall be members
18 of the Senate, not more than two (2) from the same political party, to be appointed by the
19 President of the Senate; one of whom shall be the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary

1 Education, or designee; one of whom shall be the President of the Rhode Island School
2 Association of School Committees, or designee; one of whom shall be the President of the Rhode
3 Island School Superintendents Association, or designee; one of whom shall be the Chair of the
4 Board for the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority, or designee; one of whom shall be the
5 Secretary/Treasurer of Teamsters Local 251, or designee; one of whom shall be the Director of
6 the RI Department of Children, Youth & Families, or designee; and one of whom shall be a
7 student from a school district currently experiencing transportation problems due to the existing
8 statewide system, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House.

9 In lieu of any appointment of a member of the legislature to a legislative study
10 commission, or any commission created by a General Assembly resolution, the appointing
11 authority may appoint a member of the general public to serve in lieu of a legislator, provided that
12 the majority leader or the minority leader of the political party which is entitled to the
13 appointment consents to the appointment of the member of the general public.

14 The purpose of said commission shall be to evaluate and determine the transportation
15 needs of students, the most cost-effective way of providing transportation services, whether
16 transportation costs should be incorporated into the education funding formula's core foundation
17 amount, and what changes, if any, need to be made in chapter 21.1 of title 16 of the Rhode Island
18 general laws.

19 Forthwith upon passage of this resolution, the members of the commission shall meet at
20 the call of the Speaker of the House and President of the Senate and shall select, from among the
21 legislators, co-chairpersons.

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

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

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

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

29 RESOLVED, That the commission shall report its findings and recommendations to the
30 General Assembly no later than April 16, 2025, and said commission shall expire on May 27,
31 2025.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
JOINT RESOLUTION
CREATING A SPECIAL JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY STUDENT
TRANSPORTATION NEEDS AND SYSTEM COSTS

1 This resolution would create a thirteen (13) member special joint legislative commission
2 whose purpose it would be to make a comprehensive study to determine the transportation needs
3 of students and the most cost-effective way of providing transportation services, and what
4 changes, if any, need to be made in chapter 21.1 of title 16 of the Rhode Island General Laws,
5 and which would report back to the General Assembly no later than April 16, 2025, and whose
6 life would expire on May 27, 2025.

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