

2014 -- H 7634

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LC004820
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2014

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

**CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO BE KNOWN AS THE
"BROADBAND POLICY ADVISORY BOARD"**

Introduced By: Representatives Finn, Kazarian, Blazejewski, Keable, and Hearn

Date Introduced: February 26, 2014

Referred To: House Small Business

1 WHEREAS, Broadband, also known as the high-speed Internet, has become
2 indispensable to the flow of commerce, communications, government services, and public safety,
3 and for gathering and exchanging information from infinite sources on every subject; and

4 WHEREAS, Access to the Internet has become as essential to full participation in daily
5 life as electricity and telephone service; and

6 WHEREAS, Rhode Island is currently recognized as having the best broadband
7 infrastructure speed and coverage in the nation and we have the ability to connect almost every
8 citizen and business to high-speed Internet; and

9 WHEREAS, The Federal Government authored the comprehensive National Broadband
10 Plan that validates high-speed broadband Internet as a major driver of economic development in
11 the 21st century; and

12 WHEREAS, The Federal Government and other organizations across the nation are
13 making investments in broadband infrastructure and programs to promote digital literacy and
14 broadband adoption; and

15 WHEREAS, Over 41 out of 50 states have established such recognized advisory councils
16 to address these issues in their states; and

17 WHEREAS, Many United States cities and towns are also evaluating and implementing
18 the next generation of broadband technology known as Gigabit Networks which would quickly
19 surpass current technologies, thrusting them into the forefront of economic development and

1 education opportunities; now, therefore be it

2 RESOLVED, That a special legislative commission to be known as the Broadband Policy
3 and Advisory Board be and the same is hereby created consisting of nineteen (19) members: one
4 of whom shall be a member of the House of Representatives, to be appointed by the Speaker; one
5 of whom shall be a member of the Senate, to be appointed by the President of the Senate; one of
6 whom shall be the Director of the Office of Digital Excellence, who shall be the chair of the
7 commission; one of whom shall be the Chair of the Rhode Island Board of Education, or
8 designee; one of whom shall be the Commissioner for the Office of Energy Resources, or
9 designee; one of whom shall be the Rhode Island Secretary of State, or designee; one of whom
10 shall be the Superintendent of the Rhode Island State Police, or designee; one of whom shall be
11 the Director of the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, or designee; one of whom
12 shall be the Director of the Rhode Island Department of Health, or designee; one of whom shall
13 be the Rhode Island Attorney General, or designee; one of whom shall be the Executive Director
14 of the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation; one of whom shall be the Director of Broadband RI,
15 or designee; one of whom shall be the Executive Director of the Rhode Island Library
16 Association, or designee; one of whom shall be the Director of the Ocean State Higher Education
17 Economic Development and Administrative Network (OSHEAN), or designee; one of whom
18 shall be the Director Aquidneck Island Broadband Advisory Board, or designee; and four (4) of
19 whom shall be representatives of the state's broadband industry, one of whom shall be a member
20 representing a large capitalized firm and one of whom shall be a member representing a small or
21 medium sized firm, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House, and one of whom shall be a
22 member representing a large capitalized firm and one of whom shall be a member representing a
23 small or medium sized firm, to be appointed by the President of the Senate.

24 In lieu of any appointment of a member of the legislature to a permanent advisory
25 commission, a legislative study commission, or any commission created by a General Assembly
26 resolution, the appointing authority may appoint a member of the general public to serve in lieu
27 of a legislator, provided that the majority leader or the minority leader of the political party which
28 is entitled to the appointment consents to the appointment of the member of the general public.

29 The purpose of said Board is to begin by leveraging resources of the current federally-
30 funded Broadband RI initiative along with development of a comprehensive strategic plan,
31 including specific action steps and identified responsible parties for said action steps. The plan
32 would include, but not be limited to: Creating a sustainable coordinating effort between the public
33 and private sectors to maximize economic development opportunities for businesses and citizens
34 through Rhode Island's competitive position of broadband access and utilization; Investigating,

1 reviewing, and reporting on various federal and private funding sources available for Rhode
2 Island in enhancing broadband access and utilization; Reviewing potential public policy
3 initiatives, policies, and programs, including best practices, to advance Rhode Island's use of
4 broadband for economic, cultural, and social advancement; Reviewing current and pending
5 legislative, regulatory, and administrative actions to determine and advise on their impact on
6 Rhode Island's broadband strategies; Recommending e-government strategies for Rhode Island to
7 enhance the delivery and implementation of government strategies in the state.

8 Forthwith upon passage of this resolution, the members of the commission shall meet at
9 the call of the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House and organize.

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

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

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

15 The Joint Committee on Legislative Services is hereby authorized and directed to provide
16 suitable quarters for said commission; and be it further

17 RESOLVED, That the commission shall report preliminary findings and results to the
18 General Assembly on or before February 4, 2015, and said commission shall expire on January 6,
19 2016.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
JOINT RESOLUTION
CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO BE KNOWN AS THE
"BROADBAND POLICY ADVISORY BOARD"

1 This resolution would create a nineteen (19) member special legislative commission to be
2 known as the Broadband Policy and Advisory Board and whose purpose would be to make a
3 comprehensive study of methods and avenues to pursue that would support and aid the
4 development of broadband opportunities and benefits, and who would report preliminary findings
5 to the General Assembly on or before February 4, 2015, and said commission would expire on
6 January 6, 2016.

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