

2014 -- H 7760

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LC004882  
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2014

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JOINT RESOLUTION

RESPECTFULLY REQUESTING IMMEDIATE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS TO THE  
CLAIBORNE PELL BRIDGE IN HONOR OF THE MEMORY OF KATHY MEUNIER,  
KENNY PRIOR, AND ELIJAH SWIFT

Introduced By: Representatives Ruggiero, Craven, Gallison, Abney, and Finn

Date Introduced: February 27, 2014

Referred To: House Health, Education & Welfare

(by request)

1           WHEREAS, The safe travel of all Rhode Island motorists on the state's roads and bridges  
2 is the General Assembly's paramount concern; and

3           WHEREAS, Ensuring the safe travel of Rhode Island motorists requires that the state's  
4 roads and bridges be in the safest condition possible, and that law enforcement officials strictly  
5 enforce laws prohibiting speeding and distracted driving; and

6           WHEREAS, Tragically, within the past twenty-seven months, three people have lost their  
7 lives in head-on collisions on the Claiborne Pell Bridge; and

8           WHEREAS, In each instance, the presence of an enforced hard median barrier, and strict  
9 enforcement of state speeding and distracted driving laws, may have helped in preventing these  
10 tragic accidents from occurring; and

11           WHEREAS, Despite their heartbreak, the families and friends of the victims of these  
12 recent accidents have turned their sorrow into action, forming "Citizens United for Bridge Safety"  
13 an organization committed to improving the safety of the Claiborne Pell Bridge and preventing  
14 accidents like those that befell their loved ones from happening to others; and

15           WHEREAS, The installation of median barriers is either planned, or underway, on  
16 bridges across the United States, including the iconic Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco,  
17 California; and

18           WHEREAS, While the state cannot prevent all accidents, the installation of median  
19 barriers on the Claiborne Pell Bridge, and stricter enforcement of state speeding and distracted

1 driving law, may be effective in preventing future head-on collisions; now, therefore be it

2 RESOLVED, That this General Assembly of the State of Rhode Island and Providence  
3 Plantations hereby respectfully requests the Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority install a  
4 solid median barrier on the Claiborne Pell Bridge, of a type that is designed to prevent head-on  
5 collisions without further delay and to complete the installation of the barrier by no later than  
6 March 31, 2015, to protect Rhode Island motorists. The costs of said barrier should be paid for  
7 from the Authority's own funds; and be it further

8 RESOLVED, That this General Assembly hereby respectfully requests the Rhode Island  
9 Turnpike and Bridge Authority and the Rhode Island State Police to work together to rigorously  
10 enforce the 40 miles per hour speed limit established for the bridge, and state traffic laws  
11 prohibiting distracted driving, including the law prohibiting the use of cell phones by drivers  
12 under the age of 18, and the law prohibiting texting while driving, without delay, to protect  
13 Rhode Island motorists; and be it further

14 RESOLVED, That this General Assembly hereby respectfully requests that the Rhode  
15 Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority, the Rhode Island Department of Transportation, and the  
16 Rhode Island State Police publicize their aforementioned bridge safety provisions as well as their  
17 plans to rigorously enforce the speed limit and traffic laws on the bridge; and be it further

18 RESOLVED, That this General Assembly hereby respectfully requests the Rhode Island  
19 Turnpike and Bridge Authority to report back to the Rhode Island Department of Transportation,  
20 the Rhode Island State Police, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of  
21 Representatives on their compliance with this resolution no later than December 31, 2014. Such a  
22 report may include any further recommendations by the Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge  
23 Authority to improve safety on the Claiborne Pell Bridge; and be it further

24 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to  
25 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Chairman of the Rhode Island Turnpike and  
26 Bridge Authority, the Director of the Rhode Island Department of Transportation, and the  
27 Superintendent of the Rhode Island State Police.

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