LC000355

2015 -- H 5374

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2015

JOINT RESOLUTION

TO APPROVE AND PUBLISH AND SUBMIT TO THE ELECTORS A PROPOSITION OF AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE (ETHICS COMMISSION)

Introduced By: Representatives Marcello, Hearn, Ajello, Handy, and Costantino

Date Introduced: February 11, 2015

Referred To: House Judiciary

1	RESOLVED, That a majority of all members elected to each house of the general
2	assembly voting therefore, the following amendment to the Constitution of the state be proposed
3	to the qualified electors of the state in accordance with the provisions of Article XIV of the
4	Constitution for their approval and the following sections are hereby amended, effective on
5	January 1, 2017, to read as follows:
6	ARTICLE III
7	OF QUALIFICATION FOR OFFICE
8	Section 8. Ethics commission Code of ethics. Ethics commission – Code of ethics
9	Jurisdiction The general assembly shall establish an independent non-partisan ethics
10	commission which shall adopt a code of ethics including, but to not limited to, provisions on
11	conflicts of interest, confidential information, use of position, contracts with government agencies
12	and financial disclosure. All elected and appointed officials of state and local government, of
13	boards, commissions and agencies shall be subject to the code of ethics and the jurisdiction of the
14	ethics commission. The ethics commission shall have the jurisdiction and authority to investigate
15	and adjudicate all alleged violations of the code of ethics, including acts otherwise protected by
16	Article VI, Section 5, and to impose penalties, as provided by law; and the commission shall have
17	the power to remove from office officials who are not subject to impeachment.
18	ARTICLE VI
19	OF THE LEGISLATIVE POWER

Section 5. Immunities of General Assembly members. – The persons of all members of the general assembly shall be exempt from arrest and their estates from attachment in any civil action, during the session of the general assembly, and two days after the termination thereof, and all process served contrary hereto shall be void. For any speech in debate in either house, no member shall be questioned in any other place, except by the ethics commission as set forth in Article III, section 8 of the Constitution.

RESOLVED, That the said proposition of amendment shall be submitted to the electors
for their approval or rejection at the next statewide general election. The voting places in the
several cities and towns shall be kept open during the hours required by law for voting therein for
general officers of the state; and be it further

11 RESOLVED, That the secretary of state shall cause the said proposition of amendment to 12 be published as a part of this resolution in the newspapers of the state prior to the date of the said 13 meetings of the said electors; and the said proposition shall be inserted in the warrants or notices 14 to be issued previous to said meetings of the electors for the purpose of warning the town, ward, 15 or district meetings, and said proposition shall be read by the town, ward, or district meetings to 16 be held as aforesaid; and be it further

17 RESOLVED, That the town, ward, and district meetings to be held aforesaid shall be 18 warned, and the list of voters shall be canvassed and made up, and the said town, ward, and 19 district meetings shall be conducted in the same manner as now provided by law for the town, 20 ward, and district meetings for the election of general officers of the state.

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EXPLANATION

BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

OF

JOINT RESOLUTION

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1 This joint resolution would, if approved by the General Assembly, provide for a question 2 to be submitted to the qualified electors to amend Article III, section 8 of the Rhode Island 3 Constitution so as to give the Ethics Commission the power to adjudicate all alleged violations. It 4 would also amend, if approved, Article VI, section 5, which would give the Ethics Commission 5 the power to investigate and adjudicate violations during speech in debate in either house.

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