

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2017

JOINT RESOLUTION

CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATION COMMISSION TO STUDY VETERAN AND
MILITARY SPOUSE EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Introduced By: Senators Felag, Seveney, Cote, Lynch Prata, and Jabour

Date Introduced: June 08, 2017

Referred To: Senate Special Legislation and Veterans Affairs

1 WHEREAS, Since 2001, over two million American military personnel have been
2 deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan; and

3 WHEREAS, The constant threat of foreign and domestic terrorism as well as political
4 instability abroad continues to require placing American military personnel in harm's way for the
5 greater good; and

6 WHEREAS, Rhode Island, along with the rest of the country, is witnessing the return of
7 our husbands and wives, sons and daughters, and mothers and fathers from the fields of battle;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, Rhode Island, despite its small size, has borne a significant share of sacrifice
10 in these recent conflicts; and

11 WHEREAS, The mobilization rate of the state's own National Guard to active duty status
12 is the second highest in the entire United States with over 10,000 unit deployments; and

13 WHEREAS, The number of veterans living in Rhode Island who served in the Gulf Wars
14 is three times higher than the national per capita average, and is expected to grow as the
15 operational tempo declines; and

16 WHEREAS, Rhode Island also has numerous active duty military and their families
17 stationed and living in our state, many whose spouses were employed in out-of-state licensed
18 occupations; and

19 WHEREAS, Many newly stationed Rhode Island active-duty spouses contributed to their

1 families economic well-being in other state duty stations through well-paying jobs that
2 supplemented active duty pay; and

3 WHEREAS, Certain other states recognize active-duty spouses' professional credentials
4 and licenses in an expedited, quasi-reciprocal manner, thus avoiding costly and time-consuming
5 educational, apprenticeship, and other repetitive licensure requirements; and

6 WHEREAS, The fundamental freedoms enjoyed by all citizens of our state and these
7 United States are insured in no small part through the honorable service of our nation's active-
8 duty military and honored veterans; and

9 WHEREAS, The people of this state owe a deep debt of gratitude for the sacrifices made
10 by these men and women who have placed their lives in harm's way to protect and defend our
11 nation from all foreign enemies and terrorist threats; and

12 WHEREAS, In order to ensure that these men and women and their families, upon
13 returning to and/or being newly stationed in our state, may resume their educations, personal
14 growth, and career development in Rhode Island without delay, to obtain full-time civilian
15 employment and contribute to our state's economy, all branches of state government must
16 implement policies that will assist these individuals and their families in securing the highest
17 quality Yellow Ribbon educational experience under the Post-9/11 GI Bill, as well as well-paying
18 employment opportunities through expedited professional credentialing and/or reciprocal
19 licensing rights to enhance their personal advancement and economic well-being of their families;
20 now, therefore be it

21 RESOLVED, That a special legislative commission be and the same is hereby created
22 consisting of thirteen (13) members: three (3) of whom shall be members of the House of
23 Representatives, not more than two (2) from the same political party, to be appointed by the
24 Speaker of the House; three (3) of whom shall be members of the Senate, not more than two (2)
25 from the same political party, to be appointed by the President of the Senate; one of whom shall
26 be the Commanding Officer of the Rhode Island National Guard, or designee; one of whom shall
27 be the Director of Veterans Affairs, or designee; one of whom shall be the Director of the Rhode
28 Island Veterans Administration, or designee; and four (4) of whom shall be members of the
29 public who are either active-duty military or veterans, two (2) of whom shall be appointed by the
30 Speaker of the House, and two (2) of whom shall be appointed by the Senate President.

31 In lieu of any appointment of a member of the legislature to a permanent advisory
32 commission, a legislative study commission, or any commission created by a general assembly
33 resolution, the appointing authority may appoint a member of the general public to serve in lieu
34 of a legislator; provided, that the majority leader or the minority leader of the political party

1 which is entitled to the appointment consents to the appointment of the member of the general
2 public.

3 The purpose of said commission shall be to study and discuss national best practices and
4 the implementation thereof pertaining to: the state's current status of "Yellow Ribbon" schools;
5 educational optimization of the Post-9/11 GI Bill's educational benefits; and legislation and
6 regulations needed to offer active-duty military spouses and veterans expedited state certifications
7 or professional licensure either through: reciprocity with other states with similar requirements;
8 accepting relevant military training and experience for the purposes of certification requirements;
9 or via temporary licensure/certifications that would allow these individuals to work while
10 completing outstanding state requirements for full licensure and/or certification.

11 Forthwith upon passage of this resolution, the members of the commission shall meet at
12 the call of the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate and shall organize. The
13 Speaker of the House shall designate one member of the House and the President of the Senate
14 shall designate one member of the Senate to serve as co-chairpersons of the commission.
15 Vacancies in said commission shall be filled in like manner as the original appointment. The
16 membership of said commission shall receive no compensation for their services.

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

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

22 RESOLVED, That the commission shall report its findings and recommendations to the
23 General Assembly no later than April 30, 2018, and said commission shall expire on July 30,
24 2018.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
JOINT RESOLUTION
CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATION COMMISSION TO STUDY VETERAN AND
MILITARY SPOUSE EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

1 This resolution would create a thirteen (13) member special legislative commission
2 whose purpose it would be to make a comprehensive study of veteran and military spouse
3 education and employment opportunities, and who would report back to the General Assembly no
4 later than April 30, 2018, and whose life would expire on July 30, 2018.

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