

2022 -- S 2824

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LC005613
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2022

JOINT RESOLUTION

TO AUTHORIZE AND APPROVE A REFERENDUM TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE QUALIFIED ELECTORS OF THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AT THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTION TO ALLOW THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND TO ISSUE GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS, REFUNDING BONDS, AND/OR TEMPORARY NOTES IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED TWENTY-THREE MILLION FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$23,500,000) FOR THE NEW CONSTRUCTION OF A STATE-OF-THE-ART CARBON-NEUTRAL EDUCATION CENTER AND EVENT PAVILION AT ROGER WILLIAMS PARK ZOO.

Introduced By: Senators Goodwin, and McCaffrey

Date Introduced: March 24, 2022

Referred To: Senate Finance

1 WHEREAS, The Roger Williams Park Zoo brings in over 800,000 visitors each year,
2 including over 400,000 from out of state, contributing to over \$50 million in economic impact for
3 Roger Williams Park, the city of Providence and the State of Rhode Island; and

4 WHEREAS, The Roger Williams Park Zoo's educational programs directly touch more
5 than 138,000 learners of all ages each year and provide free and reduced entry to ensure that
6 students of all backgrounds have access to these camps and programs; and

7 WHEREAS, Unlike many Zoos nationwide that receive dedicated state or local revenues,
8 the Roger Williams Park Zoo relies on entry fees and memberships for capital improvements; and

9 WHEREAS, Rhode Island voters approved \$15 million for the Zoo as part of the 2014
10 "Clean Water, Open Space and Healthy Communities" bond, which the Zoo used promptly to
11 build a brand new "Faces of the Rainforest" exhibit. The exhibit brought an estimated 36,657
12 additional visitors to the Zoo in the first year and demonstrated a positive return on investment by
13 contributing \$15.65 million in direct value to the local and state economy; and

14 WHEREAS, These projects will help the Zoo meet the technology demands of the
15 modern-day classrooms, increase student capacity to expand its education programs to Rhode
16 Island schools and provide a large venue with seating capacity for lectures, assemblies, and

1 artistic performances. Both projects will improve access and further contribute to the Zoo's
2 positive economic impacts on Roger Williams Park, the city of Providence and all of Rhode
3 Island; now, therefore be it

4 RESOLVED, There shall be submitted to the qualified electors of the State of Rhode
5 Island at the next general election for their approval the following referendum question:

6 "Shall the action of the general assembly, by an act passed at the 2022 legislative session,
7 authorizing the issuance of bonds, refunding bonds, and temporary notes of the State of Rhode
8 Island for the capital project and in the amount with respect to the project listed below be
9 approved, and the issuance of bonds, refunding bonds, and temporary notes authorized in
10 accordance with the provisions of said act?"

11 Approval of this question will allow the State of Rhode Island to issue general obligation
12 bonds, refunding bonds, and/or temporary notes in an amount not to exceed twenty-three million
13 five hundred thousand dollars (\$23,500,000) for the new construction of a state-of-the-art carbon-
14 neutral education center and event pavilion at Roger Williams Park Zoo; and be it further

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

19 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State shall cause the said proposition of amendment
20 to be published as a part of this resolution in the newspapers of the state prior to the date of the
21 said meetings of the said electors; and the said proposition shall be inserted in the warrants or
22 notices to be issued previous to said meetings of the electors for the purpose of warning the town,
23 ward, or district meetings, and said proposition shall be read by the town, city, ward, or district
24 meetings to be held as aforesaid; and be it further

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

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

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

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- 1 This resolution would allow the State of Rhode Island to issue general obligation bonds,
2 refunding bonds, and/or temporary notes in an amount not to exceed twenty-three million five
3 hundred thousand dollars (\$23,500,000) for the new construction of a state-of-the-art carbon-
4 neutral education center and event pavilion at Roger Williams Park Zoo.

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