

2026 -- H 7216

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LC003944

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

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

**CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY AND PROVIDE
RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS CONCERN IN THE DELIVERY OF
HEALTHCARE TO INMATES AND INDIVIDUALS AWAITING TRIAL IN THE CUSTODY
OF THE RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS (RIDOC)**

Introduced By: Representatives Perez, Messier, Santucci, Quattrocchi, Shallcross Smith, Fellela, Azzinaro, Fascia, Hull, and J. Lombardi

Date Introduced: January 21, 2026

Referred To: House Judiciary

1 WHEREAS, RIDOC's mission "is to maintain a safe and secure correctional system that
2 prioritizes the well-being of staff, incarcerated individuals, and the community"; and

3 WHEREAS, The Health Care Services Unit is constitutionally mandated to provide
4 medical, dental, and behavioral health care to the incarcerated inmate population who are either
5 sentenced or awaiting trial within all facilities of RIDOC; and

6 WHEREAS, RIDOC has an on-site comprehensive medical program in each facility
7 provided by internists and generalists under the clinical supervision of the Medical Programs
8 Director; and

9 WHEREAS, In late 2023/early 2024, RIDOC included six Adult Correctional Institutions
10 with an average population of 2,300 to 2,500 inmates and around 7,900 persons awaiting trial,
11 with a significant number requiring medical services, including mental health and psychiatric
12 care, and treatment for substance use disorders; and

13 WHEREAS, By mid 2023 it was estimated that, between 15 and 20 percent of Rhode
14 Island's prison population were considered severely and persistently mentally ill; and

15 WHEREAS, As of January 2023, 40 percent of Rhode Island's prison population were
16 receiving psychiatric services, 31 percent were receiving mental health counseling, and 70 to 80
17 percent have histories of substance use; and

18 WHEREAS, RIDOC has faced issues with the delivery of health care, including limited

1 access to mental health care and necessary substance use disorder treatments; and

2 WHEREAS, A lack of consistent and adequate medical treatment can have disastrous and
3 fatal consequences; now, therefore be it

4 RESOLVED, That a special legislative commission be and the same is hereby created
5 consisting of nine (9) members: three (3) of whom shall be members of the Rhode Island House
6 of Representatives, not more than two (2) from the same political party, to be appointed by the
7 Speaker of the House; one of whom shall be the Director of the Rhode Island Department of
8 Corrections, or designee; one of whom shall be the Medical Director of the Rhode Island
9 Department of Corrections, or designee; one of whom shall be the Rhode Island Attorney
10 General, or designee; one of whom shall be the Director of the Rhode Island Department of
11 Health, or designee; and two (2) of whom shall be representatives of an inmates' rights group, to
12 be appointed by the Speaker of the House.

13 In lieu of any appointment of a member of the legislature to a legislative study
14 commission, or any commission created by a General Assembly resolution, the appointing
15 authority may appoint a member of the general public to serve in lieu of a legislator.

16 The purpose of said commission shall be to make a comprehensive study and analysis of
17 the delivery of healthcare services at Rhode Island's correctional institutions and provide
18 recommendations to address concerns and deficiencies in the delivery of these healthcare
19 services.

20 Forthwith upon passage of this resolution, the members of the commission shall meet at
21 the call of the Speaker of the House and organize and shall select a chairperson.

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

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

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

27 The Speaker of the House is hereby authorized and directed to provide suitable quarters
28 for said commission; and be it further

29 RESOLVED, That the commission shall report its findings and recommendations to the
30 House of Representatives no later than January 5, 2027, and said commission shall expire on
31 March 5, 2027.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

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- 1 This resolution would create a nine (9) member special legislative study commission
- 2 whose purpose it would be to study and provide recommendations for improvements in the
- 3 delivery of health care services at RIDOC, and who would report back to the House no later than
- 4 January 5, 2027, and whose life would expire on March 5, 2027.

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