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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

JOINT RESOLUTION

MAKING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$100,000 FOR THE RHODE ISLAND COMMISSION
ON PREJUDICE AND BIAS

Introduced By: Senators Mack, and Paolino

Date Introduced: May 09, 2025

Referred To: Senate Finance

1 WHEREAS, The Rhode Island General Assembly established the Commission on
2 Prejudice and Bias (the "commission") in 1981, in order to study all forms of prejudice, bias, or
3 hatred in this State and to revise and codify, if possible, all laws relating to all forms of prejudice,
4 bias, or hatred; and

5 WHEREAS, This unique, diverse 17-member commission is dedicated to tackling the
6 persistent issues of bigotry in Rhode Island and includes State legislators, gubernatorial-appointed
7 community leaders, Attorney General-appointed members, and law enforcement representatives;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, The commission is a prominent and necessary channel of communication,
10 collaboration, trust-building and understanding between legislators, law enforcement, and the
11 communities they are sworn to serve and protect; and

12 WHEREAS, The commission provides hate crime training mandated by Rhode Island
13 General Laws § 42-28.2-8.1 for all law enforcement academies; and

14 WHEREAS, The commission provides hate crime training and education to current law
15 enforcement, victim’s advocates, and community groups pursuant to Rhode Island General Laws
16 § 42-28-46; and

17 WHEREAS, The commission receives reports of hate crimes and incidents from Rhode
18 Islanders and directs victims to resources whenever possible, while advising police departments
19 and the Office of the Attorney General where appropriate; and

1 WHEREAS, The commission provides invaluable guidance to the Governor, Attorney
2 General, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Senate President on critical laws and
3 policies related to prejudice and bias; and

4 WHEREAS, The commission has operated successfully through grants from the federal
5 Victims of Crime Act, the United States Bureau of Justice Assistance, and the RI Department of
6 Administration; and

7 WHEREAS, The scope of work has expanded over the decades and the funding streams
8 once relied upon no longer enable the execution of the commission's mission statement; and

9 WHEREAS, Despite its proven success, the commission's operations have been hindered
10 by diminishing Federal and State funding sources, such as grants from the Victims of Crime Act,
11 the U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance, and the RI Department of Administration, which are no
12 longer sufficient to meet the demands of studying and reporting all forms of prejudice and hatred
13 in Rhode Islanders; and

14 WHEREAS, The commission serves on behalf of all Rhode Islanders, is a statutorily
15 created body, and the thorough execution of its duties and responsibilities is only possible with
16 the appropriate level of resources; now, therefore be it

17 RESOLVED, That there is hereby appropriated, out of any money in the treasury not
18 otherwise appropriated for the fiscal year 2025-2026, the sum of one hundred thousand dollars
19 (\$100,000) to be distributed to the Rhode Island Commission on Prejudice and Bias via its fiscal
20 agent the RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence; and the state controller is hereby authorized
21 and directed to draw their orders upon the general treasurer for the payment of said sum, upon
22 receipt of properly authenticated vouchers.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
JOINT RESOLUTION
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- 1 This resolution would appropriate the sum of \$100,000 to the Rhode Island Commission
- 2 on Prejudice and Bias.

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