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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

JOINT RESOLUTION

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

Introduced By: Senators Mack, Paolino, and Acosta

Date Introduced: January 23, 2026

Referred To: Senate Finance

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

5 WHEREAS, This diverse seventeen (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 Law § 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 Law §
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 Victims
5 of Crime Act, the United States Bureau of Justice Assistance, and the Rhode Island Department
6 of Administration; and

7 WHEREAS, The scope of work has expanded over the decades and the funding streams
8 once relied on 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 Rhode Island Department of Administration, which
12 are no longer sufficient to meet the demands of reporting and studying all forms of prejudice and
13 hatred in Rhode Island; 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 2026-2027, 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
MAKING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$100,000 FOR THE RHODE ISLAND COMMISSION
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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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