

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND**

**IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026**

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**SENATE RESOLUTION**

**CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO MAKE A COMPREHENSIVE  
STUDY OF RHODE ISLAND'S HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE RELATED TO EDUCATING  
AND RETAINING PRIMARY CARE PROVIDERS**

Introduced By: Senators Lauria, Lawson, DiMario, Valverde, Murray, Vargas, DiPalma,  
Mack, Kallman, and Urso

Date Introduced: March 12, 2026

Referred To: Senate Health & Human Services

1           WHEREAS, Nationally the demand for primary care providers continues to increase;  
2 however, nearly one-third of Americans do not have a primary care provider; and

3           WHEREAS, Rhode Island residents are struggling to find primary care providers  
4 resulting in the use of emergency rooms and urgent care facilities to meet their medical needs;  
5 and

6           WHEREAS, Rhode Island has a limited medical education infrastructure which  
7 contributes to low rates of provider retention; and

8           WHEREAS, Workforce retention challenges among primary care physicians, nurse  
9 practitioners, and physician assistants in Rhode Island signal the importance of coordinated  
10 investments in payment, team-based infrastructure, and opportunities for advancement; and

11           WHEREAS, Despite graduating one hundred and six primary care residents on average  
12 in Rhode Island each year, only fifteen graduates plan to stay in state; and

13           WHEREAS, Rhode Island must look toward prioritizing primary care workforce  
14 retention and graduate medical education programs for the next generation of primary care  
15 residents; now, therefore be it

16           RESOLVED, That a special legislative commission be and the same is hereby created  
17 consisting of seventeen (17) members: four (4) of whom shall be members of the Rhode Island  
18 Senate, to be appointed by the President of the Senate; two (2) of whom shall be members of the  
19 Rhode Island House of Representatives, to be appointed by the President of the Senate; one of

1 whom shall be the Dean of the University of Rhode Island School of Medicine, or designee; one  
2 of whom shall be the Dean of the Brown University School of Medicine, or designee; one of  
3 whom shall be the President of the Nurse Practitioner Alliance of Rhode Island; or designee; one  
4 of whom shall be the President of the Rhode Island Academy of Physician Assistants, or  
5 designee; one of whom shall be President of the Rhode Island Pharmacist Association, or  
6 designee; one of whom shall be the Executive Director of the Rhode Island Medical Society; or  
7 designee; one of whom shall be the Executive Director of the Care Transformation Collaborative  
8 Rhode Island, or designee; one of whom shall be a representative from the community health  
9 centers, to be appointed by the President of the Senate; one of whom shall be a representative of  
10 community nonprofits, to be appointed by the President of the Senate; and two (2) of whom shall  
11 be representatives of persons with community expertise in primary care, to be appointed by the  
12 President of the Senate.

13 The purpose of said commission shall be to make a comprehensive study of Rhode  
14 Island's healthcare workforce related to educating and retaining primary care providers,  
15 including, but not limited to:

16 • Studying and developing recommendations for establishing and financing sufficient  
17 primary care graduate medical education resources in the state, leveraging the state's well-  
18 established community health center network;

19 • An annual report on Rhode Islanders' access to a usual source of care, the number  
20 and distribution of primary care clinicians practicing in the state, the numbers entering and  
21 leaving practice in the state, and recommendations to ensure all Rhode Islanders report having  
22 access to a usual source of care; and

23 • An annual report on the status of Rhode Island's primary care institutional and  
24 clinical education resources and the programs supporting these students financially.

25 Forthwith upon passage of this resolution, the members of the commission shall be  
26 appointed and shall meet at the call of the Senate President and organize and the Senate President  
27 shall appoint a chair.

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

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

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

33 The Commission may be allotted annual budget resources to complete these functions.

34 The Joint Committee on Legislative Services is hereby authorized and directed to provide

1 suitable quarters for said commission; and be it further

2 RESOLVED, That the commission shall develop and be ongoing with recommendations

3 submitted annually to the President of the Senate.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
SENATE RESOLUTION  
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- 1           This resolution would create a special legislative commission consisting of seventeen  
2 (17) members whose purpose it would be to study Rhode Island's healthcare workforce related to  
3 educating and retaining primary care providers and who would report back annually to the  
4 President of the Senate.

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