

2019 -- H 5027

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LC000239  
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2019

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

RESPECTFULLY REQUESTING THAT THE RHODE ISLAND ATTORNEY GENERAL AND THE RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF ELECTIONS INITIATE A CAMPAIGN TO REFORM THE RHODE ISLAND CAMPAIGN PROCESS BY INITIATING A LAWSUIT AGAINST THOSE ENTITIES AND PEOPLE WHO TRY TO MANIPULATE CAMPAIGN FINANCE LAWS AND, THEREFORE, ELECTIONS, AND BY ADOPTING RECENTLY PASSED STATE LAWS THAT FIGHT BACK AGAINST THIS MANIPULATION

Introduced By: Representatives Marshall, O'Brien, Shekarchi, Kennedy, and Ucci

Date Introduced: January 04, 2019

Referred To: House Judiciary

1           WHEREAS, In the past few years, there have been numerous newspaper stories  
2 documenting the process by which people and organizations have sought to circumvent state  
3 campaign finance laws by advertising with companies such as Google and Facebook that do not  
4 keep and maintain records of election advertisements on their platforms. Among the newspaper  
5 stories is a June 4, 2018, Reuters article outlining a lawsuit brought by the state of Washington  
6 against Facebook, Inc. and Alphabet, Inc.'s Google for allegedly violating state campaign finance  
7 laws by failing to maintain information about who buys election advertisement; and

8           WHEREAS, These attempts to get around campaign finance laws and regulations are a  
9 threat to our State's democratic process because they attack the system of fair elections. If those  
10 with large resources can manipulate and circumvent campaign finance laws, then they undermine  
11 citizens' faith and belief that elections are being run fairly and that those who do emerge  
12 victorious were legitimately elected by the voters; and

13           WHEREAS, Recently, a spate of lawsuits, and settlements, have occurred against  
14 companies not abiding by the spirit of campaign finance laws. Also, states such as California,  
15 New York and Maine have most recently decide to adopt federal law requirements mandating  
16 digital transparency of all political campaign advertisements; now, therefore be it

17           RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island and

1 Providence Plantations hereby respectfully requests that the Rhode Island Attorney General in  
2 collaboration with the Rhode Island Board of Elections undertake a review of these campaign  
3 finance processes and practices as they relate to possible manipulation of state of Rhode Island  
4 campaign finance laws and take the appropriate measures to guard against any possible  
5 manipulation of campaign finance laws; and be it further

6           RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to send  
7 duly certified copies of this resolution to the Governor of Rhode Island, the Honorable Gina M.  
8 Raimondo, the Attorney General of Rhode Island, the Honorable Peter F. Neronha, and Ms.  
9 Diane C. Mederos, Chairwoman of the Rhode Island Board of Elections.

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