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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2015

SENATE RESOLUTION

**CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY AND MAKE
RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE REGULATIONS AND ENFORCEMENT NECESSARY
FOR THE PROPER OPERATION OF HOMELESS SHELTERS**

Introduced By: Senators Crowley, Jabour, Sosnowski, Metts, and Pichardo

Date Introduced: January 22, 2015

Referred To: Senate Housing & Municipal Government

1 RESOLVED, That a special legislative commission be and the same is hereby created
2 consisting of eleven (11) members: three (3) of whom shall be members of the Senate, not more
3 than two (2) from the same political party, to be appointed by the President of the Senate; one of
4 whom shall be the Chief of the Rhode Island Office of Housing and Community Development, or
5 designee; one of whom shall be the Executive Director of the Rhode Island Coalition for the
6 Homeless, or designee; one of whom shall be a member of the Rhode Island Homeless Advocacy
7 Project (RIHAP), to be appointed by the President of the Senate; one of whom shall be a
8 homeless shelter provider operating a shelter for individuals in Rhode Island, to be appointed by
9 the President of the Senate; one of whom shall be a homeless shelter provider operating a shelter
10 for families in Rhode Island, to be appointed by the President of the Senate; one of whom shall be
11 a domestic violence shelter provider, to be appointed by the President of the Senate; one of whom
12 shall be a homeless or formerly homeless person, to be appointed by the President of the Senate;
13 and one of whom shall be a resident or former resident of a domestic violence shelter, to be
14 appointed by the President of the Senate.

15 In lieu of any appointment of a member of the legislature to a permanent advisory
16 commission, a legislative study commission, or any commission created by a General Assembly
17 resolution, the appointing authority may appoint a member of the general public to serve in lieu
18 of a legislator, provided that the majority leader or the minority leader of the political party which
19 is entitled to the appointment consent to the member of the general public.

1 The purpose of said commission shall be to make a comprehensive study and develop
2 model legislation and recommendations necessary for the regulation and enforcement of the
3 proper operation of homeless shelters for individuals and families in Rhode Island. This study
4 should include, but not be limited to:

- 5 • Baseline organizational standards that any agency operating a homeless shelter must
6 meet;
- 7 • Access to shelter guidelines, including admission and discharge, bed registration,
8 substance use, and service restrictions (barrings);
- 9 • Residents' rights and responsibilities, including resident input, complaints and
10 appeals, and grievance procedures;
- 11 • Program standards including the provision of essential services, counseling supports,
12 daytime access, confidentiality, sharing of resident information, safeguarding resident files, and
13 staff code of conduct;
- 14 • Health and safety standards including basic health and safety protocols, the safeguard
15 of, and access to, resident medication, a policy on weapons, and requirements for staff training on
16 health and safety issues; and
- 17 • Emergency and winter shelter standards including the definition of inclement weather
18 events, in all seasons, that trigger requirements for homeless shelters to stay open for the
19 protection of residents.

20 Forthwith upon passage of this resolution, the members of the commission shall meet at
21 the call of the President of the Senate, who shall appoint 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 Joint Committee on Legislative Services is hereby authorized and directed to provide
28 suitable quarters for said commission; and be it further

29 RESOLVED, That the commission shall report its findings and recommendations to the
30 President of the Senate no later than January 19, 2016, and said commission shall expire on
31 March 19, 2016.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY AND MAKE
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FOR THE PROPER OPERATION OF HOMELESS SHELTERS

1 This resolution would create an eleven (11) member special legislative commission
2 whose purpose it would be to make a comprehensive study and develop model legislation and
3 recommendations necessary for the regulation and enforcement of the proper operation of
4 homeless shelters, and who shall report back to the President of the Senate no later than January
5 19, 2016, and whose life would expire on March 19, 2016.

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