

2014 -- S 2872

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2014

SENATE RESOLUTION

COMMENDING STATE AND LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES ON
SUCCESSFULLY INVESTIGATING AND LITIGATING A SETTLEMENT WITH GOOGLE
AND RESPECTFULLY REQUESTING THAT NO LESS THAN 15 PERCENT OF THE \$230
MILLION GOOGLE SETTLEMENT FUNDS BE USED TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY-
BASED PROGRAMS

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

Date Introduced: April 09, 2014

Referred To: Senate Finance

1 WHEREAS, The United States Justice Department, with assistance from the office of the
2 Rhode Island Attorney General, and both the North Providence and East Providence Police
3 Departments, investigated internet search company Google for allowing Canadian pharmacies to
4 illegally sell their drugs to American consumers through their website; and

5 WHEREAS, As a result of this investigation and under the terms of an agreement with
6 the United States government, Google agreed to forfeit \$500 million, reflecting the gross revenue
7 received by the company as a result of the advertising; and

8 WHEREAS, The success of this investigation serves as a model of joint federal and state
9 law enforcement cooperation and could not have been accomplished without the efforts of the
10 United States Attorney's Office, the Food and Drug Administration's Office of Criminal
11 Investigations, the Internal Revenue Service's Criminal Investigation unit, the U.S. Immigration
12 and Customs Enforcement-Homeland Security Investigations unit, the U.S. Postal Inspection
13 Service, the Rhode Island State Police, the Rhode Island National Guard, the Rhode Island
14 Department of the Attorney General, the East Providence Police Department, and the North
15 Providence Police Department; and

16 WHEREAS, Rhode Island's share of the \$500 million forfeited by Google in response to
17 the investigation is \$230 million; and

18 WHEREAS, This \$230 million is to be distributed among the Rhode Island National

1 Guard, the Rhode Island Department of the Attorney General, the East Providence Police
2 Department, and the North Providence Police Department, as per the agreement with the federal
3 government; and

4 WHEREAS, The use of these funds is restricted to certain purposes as outlined in the
5 United States Department of Justice's "equitable sharing" guidelines; and

6 WHEREAS, According to the "Guide to Equitable Sharing for State and Local Law
7 Enforcement Agencies" issued by the United States Department of Justice in April of 2009,
8 among the permissible uses of equitable sharing funds is the support of community-based
9 programs; and

10 WHEREAS, Said guidelines stipulate that up to 15 percent of the total shared monies
11 received can be used for costs associated with substance or drug use disorder treatment programs,
12 drug and crime prevention education, housing and job skills programs, or other nonprofit
13 community-based programs or activities that are formally approved by a chief law enforcement
14 officer; and

15 WHEREAS, Rhode Island is currently experiencing a drug overdose epidemic that has
16 claimed over 70 lives as of April 1st of this year; and

17 WHEREAS, Expansion of community-based behavioral healthcare, substance use
18 disorder prevention, and addiction recovery programs, will help combat and prevent addiction
19 and overdose, provide support for those struggling with addiction and their families, and assist
20 individuals in their recovery; and

21 WHEREAS, Returning to the community from jail or prison is a complex transition for
22 many former offenders, as well as for their families and communities; and studies indicate that
23 upon reentering society, former offenders are more likely than others to struggle with substance
24 use disorders, lack of adequate education and job skills, limited housing options, and mental
25 health issues; and

26 WHEREAS, Expansion of prisoner re-entry programs will help these individuals return
27 to society and lead productive lives, reduce crime, lower costs associated with incarceration, and
28 ultimately benefit all Rhode Islanders; and

29 WHEREAS, Quality job training programs and access to affordable housing will not only
30 help reduce the rate of crime and recidivism in Rhode Island, but will also provide an added
31 benefit to the state's economy and workforce; and

32 WHEREAS, Community-based programs, as funded through the Rhode Island National
33 Guard, could also focus on the particular needs of ex-offenders who are former guardsmen and
34 guardswomen, as well as other veterans and their families, that may be facing the challenge of

1 substance use disorder, lack of adequate education, limited housing options, and/or mental health
2 issues; now, therefore be it

3 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
4 hereby commends the Rhode Island State Police, the Rhode Island National Guard, the Rhode
5 Island Department of the Attorney General, the East Providence Police Department, and the
6 North Providence Police Department, on the hard-fought legal victory for all Rhode Islanders;
7 and be it further,

8 RESOLVED, That this Senate hereby respectfully requests that no less than 15 percent of
9 the Google settlement funds be used to support community-based programs concentrating on drug
10 use disorder treatment, drug and crime prevention education, housing and job skills programs,
11 and other nonprofit community-based programs, including those to assist ex-offenders who are
12 re-entering society; and be it further

13 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
14 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Rhode Island Attorney General, the
15 Superintendent of the Rhode Island State Police, the Adjutant General of the Rhode Island
16 National Guard, the Chief of the East Providence Police Department, and the Chief of the North
17 Providence Police Department.

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