

2016 -- S 3054

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2016

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SENATE RESOLUTION

RESPECTFULLY REQUESTING THE COMMISSIONER OF POSTSECONDARY  
EDUCATION TO PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE PROVISION OF HEALTH  
INSURANCE TO ADJUNCT FACULTY MEMBERS

Introduced By: Senator Joshua Miller

Date Introduced: May 31, 2016

Referred To: Senate Health & Human Services

1           WHEREAS, Under the Affordable Care Act, employers are required to offer health  
2 coverage to most employees who work an average of 30 or more hours per week, including  
3 adjunct faculty, or pay a "headcount tax"; and

4           WHEREAS, According to a January 2014 Congressional Report, over the past 40 years  
5 the proportion of faculty who are adjuncts has grown from 20 percent to approximately 50  
6 percent of all higher education faculty. There are now more than one million adjunct faculty  
7 employees across the nation; however, the fundamental employment terms for these positions,  
8 including salaries and benefits, have remained largely unchanged; and

9           WHEREAS, According to the National Association of College and University Attorneys  
10 (NACUA), adjunct faculty often spend significant amounts of non-classroom time on class  
11 preparation, grading, office hours, student counseling, and other required departmental or  
12 institutional tasks. The workload of any single adjunct faculty member is dependent on a myriad  
13 of factors, including the course being taught, whether the instructor has taught the course in the  
14 past, whether the course has a set template that the instructor must follow, the institution's policy  
15 with regard to office hours, and the instructor's efficiency outside of the classroom; and

16           WHEREAS, According to the Chronicle of Higher Education, instead of teaching a few  
17 courses to supplement other employment, more adjuncts now rely on such work for their entire  
18 livelihood by teaching part-time at multiple schools; and

19           WHEREAS, According to the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, some

1 accrediting bodies examine the treatment of adjuncts as criteria in their accreditation standards.  
2 There is a connection between adjuncts' working conditions, the quality of instruction, and the  
3 resulting student learning outcomes; and

4 WHEREAS, There is a growing trend of support for the argument that traditional  
5 approaches to adjunct faculty employment relationships are no longer fair or desirable from a  
6 public policy perspective. Adjuncts are highly qualified and play a critical role in educating the  
7 nation's post-secondary students. We need to adjust compensation terms to ensure that students at  
8 our state's colleges and universities receive the highest quality educations; now, therefore be it

9 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations  
10 hereby respectfully requests that the Commissioner of Postsecondary Education and the Council  
11 on Postsecondary Education provide recommendations regarding the financial and programmatic  
12 impacts of providing health insurance benefits to adjunct faculty members at our public colleges  
13 and universities; and be it further

14 RESOLVED, That this Senate hereby respectfully requests that the written  
15 recommendations be submitted to the Senate President and to the Chair of the Senate Committee  
16 on Health and Human Services on or before January 1, 2017; and be it further

17 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to  
18 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Chairperson of the Council on  
19 Postsecondary Education and the Commissioner of Postsecondary Education.

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