

2011 -- S 0116

LC00447

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2011

JOINT RESOLUTION

CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO BE KNOWN AS "THE RHODE ISLAND CIVIL WAR SESQUICENTENNIAL COMMEMORATION COMMISSION"

Introduced By: Senators McCaffrey, Felag, and Lynch

Date Introduced: January 27, 2011

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

1 WHEREAS, The American Civil War was a defining experience in the development of  
2 the United States; and

3 WHEREAS, The people of the United States continue to struggle with issues of race,  
4 civil rights, heritage, and the politics of federalism, which are legacies of the Civil War and  
5 Reconstruction; and

6 WHEREAS, There is a resurgence of interest in the Civil War that is evidenced by the  
7 multitude of publications, exhibits, reenactments, research organizations, Internet and multimedia  
8 resources, historic parks, and preservation associations focused on the Civil War; and

9 WHEREAS, Rhode Island provided more troops proportionately to the Union than any  
10 other northern state; and

11 WHEREAS, Rhode Island citizens supported the administration of President Abraham  
12 Lincoln in many ways, by voting for him in 1860 and 1864, as well as providing cultural,  
13 political, and military support; and

14 WHEREAS, The years 2010 through 2015 mark the sesquicentennial of the period,  
15 beginning with the election of Abraham Lincoln and concluding with the end of the Civil War;  
16 and

17 WHEREAS, Notable milestones during this period include the following:

- 18 • On November 6, 1860, Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United  
19 States;

- 1           • On December 20, 1860, in a special convention, the South Carolina Legislature  
2           voted to secede from the Union following the election of Lincoln. In the early  
3           months of the following year, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana,  
4           and Texas seceded and formed the Confederate States of America;
- 5           • In April, 1861, Confederate forces fired on Fort Sumter, the first shots fired in  
6           the Civil War. In response, President Lincoln ordered the blockade of all  
7           Confederate ports and called for 75,000 volunteers to enlist in the Union Army.  
8           Four more Southern States, Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina,  
9           seceded in the months following the attack on Fort Sumter;
- 10          • The Civil War spawned numerous campaigns, battles, and engagements,  
11          including Bull Run, the Monitor versus the Merrimac, the Peninsula Campaign,  
12          Shiloh, the Capture of New Orleans, the Shenandoah Valley Campaign, Seven  
13          Pines, Seven Days, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, the  
14          Siege of Vicksburg, Chickamauga, Chattanooga, Wilderness, the Siege at  
15          Petersburg, the Capture of Atlanta, the March to the Sea, Nashville, and  
16          Appomattox;
- 17          • On January 1, 1863, President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation,  
18          freeing all slaves in states or parts of states considered to be in rebellion against  
19          the Federal Government;
- 20          • On June 28, 1864, President Lincoln repealed all fugitive slave laws;
- 21          • On January 31, 1865, the United States Congress, with the vigorous support of  
22          Abraham Lincoln, passed the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution, abolishing  
23          slavery and involuntary servitude;
- 24          • On April 9, 1865, Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomattox  
25          Courthouse;
- 26          • On April 14, 1865, President Lincoln was shot by Confederate sympathizer John  
27          Wilkes Booth while attending a play at Ford's Theatre, and died the next day;
- 28          • In April and May 1865, Confederate Generals Joseph Johnson and E. Kirby  
29          Smith, leaders of the remaining organized Confederate Forces, surrendered,  
30          formally ending the Southern Resistance; and
- 31          • By the end of the Civil War, an estimated 620,000 Union and Confederate  
32          soldiers had been killed and over 471,000 wounded, making the Civil War the  
33          bloodiest war in the history of our Nation; and

34           WHEREAS, The sesquicentennial of the Civil War presents a significant opportunity for

1 Rhode Islanders and all Americans to recall and reflect upon all aspects of that conflict and its  
2 legacy in a spirit of reconciliation and honest reflection, through exploration, interpretation, and  
3 discussion; now, therefore be it

4         RESOLVED, That a special legislative commission to be known as “The Rhode Island  
5 Civil War Sesquicentennial Commemoration Commission” be and the same is hereby created  
6 consisting of twenty-seven (27) members: two (2) of whom shall be members of the Senate, not  
7 more than one from the same political party, to be appointed by the President of the Senate; two  
8 (2) of whom shall be members of the House of Representatives, not more than one from the same  
9 political party, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; one of whom shall be the Adjutant  
10 General of the State of Rhode Island, or designee; one of whom shall be the President of the  
11 Rhode Island Civil War Roundtable, or designee; one of whom shall be the Chair of the Lincoln  
12 Forum, or designee; one of whom shall be the Commanding General of the New England  
13 Brigade, or designee; one of whom shall be the Rhode Island State Archivist, or designee; one of  
14 whom shall be a member from the Rhode Island State Council on the Humanities, to be appointed  
15 by its Executive Director; one of whom shall be a member from the Rhode Island Economic  
16 Development Corporation, to be appointed by its Executive Director; one of whom shall be a  
17 member from the Rhode Island Historical Society, to be appointed by its Executive Director; one  
18 of whom shall be a member from the Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission, to be  
19 appointed by its Executive Director; one of whom shall be a member from the Rhode Island State  
20 Council on the Arts, to be appointed by its Executive Director; one of whom shall be a member  
21 from the Lincoln Group of Boston, to be appointed by the organization’s President; one of whom  
22 shall be a member of the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary  
23 Education, to be appointed by the Chairperson of the Board; one of whom shall be a member of  
24 the Rhode Island Board of Governors for Higher Education, to be appointed by the Chairperson  
25 of the Board; one of whom shall be the curator of the McLellan Lincoln Collection at The John  
26 Hay Library of Special Collections at Brown University, or designee; one of whom shall be the  
27 curator of the Anne S. K. Brown and Military Collections at Brown University, or designee; one  
28 of whom shall be the Director of Hearthsides House, located in the Town of Lincoln, or designee;  
29 one of whom shall be the Rhode Island Commander, Military Order of the Loyal Legion, or  
30 designee; one of whom shall be the President of the Providence Chapter of the N.A.A.C.P., or  
31 designee; one of whom shall be the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Urban League of  
32 Rhode Island, or designee; and four (4) of whom shall be members of the general public with a  
33 demonstrated interest in history and substantial knowledge and appreciation of the Civil War, to  
34 be appointed by the Governor.

1           In lieu of any appointment of a member of the legislature to a permanent advisory  
2 commission, a legislative study commission, or any commission created by a General Assembly  
3 resolution, the appointing authority may appoint a member of the general public to serve in lieu  
4 of a legislator, provided that the majority leader or the minority leader of the political party which  
5 is entitled to the appointment consents to the appointment of the member of the general public.

6           The purpose of said Commission shall be to make a comprehensive study in order to:

- 7           • Ensure a suitable observance in the State of Rhode Island of the sesquicentennial  
8           of the Civil War that includes recognition of the historic, social, legal, cultural,  
9           and political forces that caused the American Civil War and influenced its course  
10          and outcomes;
- 11          • Collaborate with and assist other state and national organizations with programs  
12          and activities for the observance of the sesquicentennial of the Civil War in the  
13          State of Rhode Island;
- 14          • Observe and study Rhode Island's participation in the Civil War, including the  
15          contribution of its soldiers, sailors, and citizens;
- 16          • Assist in ensuring that any observance of the sesquicentennial of the Civil War is  
17          inclusive and appropriately recognizes the experiences and points of view of all  
18          people affected by the Civil War; and
- 19          • Provide assistance for the development of programs, projects, and activities on  
20          the Civil War that have lasting educational value within the State of Rhode  
21          Island.

22          The duties of said Commission shall be to:

- 23          • Plan, develop, and carry out programs and activities appropriate to commemorate  
24          the sesquicentennial of the Civil War and Rhode Island's participation and  
25          contributions therein, including activities in recognition of the historic, social,  
26          legal, cultural, and political forces that caused the American Civil War and  
27          influenced its course and outcomes;
- 28          • Encourage interdisciplinary examination of the Civil War;
- 29          • Facilitate Civil War-related activities throughout the State of Rhode Island;
- 30          • Encourage civic, historical, educational, economic, and other organizations  
31          throughout the State of Rhode Island to organize and participate in activities to  
32          expand the understanding and appreciation of the significance of the Civil War;
- 33          • Coordinate and facilitate the public distribution of scholarly research,  
34          publications, and interpretations of the Civil War;

- 1           • Provide assistance to localities, and nonprofit organizations to further the  
2           commemoration of the sesquicentennial of the Civil War;
- 3           • Develop programs and facilities to ensure that the sesquicentennial  
4           commemoration of the Civil War results in a positive legacy and long-term  
5           public benefit; and
- 6           • Encourage the development and conduct of programs and activities that  
7           commemorate the Civil War and Rhode Island’s participation and contributions  
8           therein.

9           Appointments to the Commission shall be made within sixty (60) days of the passage of  
10          this resolution. The members of the Commission shall meet no later than sixty (60) days after the  
11          completion of all appointments to the Commission, and shall select a Chairperson and a Vice  
12          Chairperson from among its voting members. Subsequent meetings of the Commission shall be  
13          at the call of the Commission’s Chairperson.

14          A majority of members shall constitute a quorum, but a lesser number may hold  
15          meetings. The commission shall act only on an affirmative vote of a majority of the voting  
16          members of the Commission.

17          Vacancies in said Commission shall be filled in like manner as the original appointment.

18          The membership of said Commission shall receive no compensation for their services.

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

22          The Commission may, for the purpose of carrying out its duties:

- 23           • Accept and use gifts of money, property, and services, and may accept and use  
24           voluntary services;
- 25           • Appoint any advisory committee as the Commission considers appropriate;
- 26           • Authorize any voting member or employee of the Commission to take any action  
27           that the Commission is authorized to take under duties and purpose of the  
28           commission;
- 29           • Procure supplies, services, and property, and make or enter into contracts, leases,  
30           or other legal documents to carry out its duties and purpose (except that any  
31           contracts, leases, or other legal agreements entered into by the Commission shall  
32           not extend beyond the date of the Commission’s expiration;
- 33           • To perform any and all other activities in connection with the educational,  
34           charitable and scientific purposes of the Commission within the meaning of

1                   Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, and to  
2                   work in conjunction with other 501(c)(3) and non-profit organizations with a  
3                   similar mission.

4                   The Joint Committee on Legislative Services is hereby authorized and directed to provide  
5                   suitable quarters in the State House for said Commission; and be it further

6                   RESOLVED, That the Commission shall prepare a strategic plan and shall submit annual  
7                   performance plans for the activities of the commission to the General Assembly. In addition to  
8                   performance plans, said reports shall contain a list of each gift, bequest, or devise with a value of  
9                   more than two hundred fifty dollars (\$250), together with the identity of the donor of each such  
10                  gift, bequest, or devise; and be it further

11                  RESOLVED, That the Commission shall issue a final report that contains a summary of  
12                  activities of the Commission, a final accounting of funds received and expended by the  
13                  Commission, and the findings and recommendations of the Commission to the General Assembly  
14                  not later than January 5, 2016, and said Commission shall expire on March 5, 2016.

=====  
LC00447  
=====

EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
JOINT RESOLUTION  
CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO BE KNOWN AS "THE RHODE  
ISLAND CIVIL WAR SESQUICENTENNIAL COMMEMORATION COMMISSION"

\*\*\*

1           This resolution would create a twenty-seven (27) member special legislative commission  
2 to be known as "The Rhode Island Civil War Sesquicentennial Commemoration Commission"  
3 whose purpose it would be to make a comprehensive study pertaining to the sesquicentennial of  
4 the Civil War, and who would report back annually and make its final report to the General  
5 Assembly on or before January 5, 2016, and said commission would expire on March 5, 2016.

=====  
LC00447

=====