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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2012

JOINT RESOLUTION

URGING CONGRESS TO PASS AND SEND TO THE STATES A CONSTITUTIONAL
AMENDMENT PERMITTING STATE AND FEDERAL REGULATION AND RESTRICTION
OF INDEPENDENT POLITICAL EXPENDITURES

Introduced By: Senators Paiva Weed, Ruggerio, Pichardo, McCaffrey, and Goodwin

Date Introduced: March 01, 2012

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

1 WHEREAS, The growing influence of large independent political expenditures by
2 corporations and wealthy individuals is a great and growing concern to the people of the United
3 States and the State of Rhode Island; and

4 WHEREAS, In a democracy the assurance of a fair and uncorrupted election process is of
5 the utmost importance, and the Rhode Island General Assembly believes that it is a legitimate
6 and vital role of government to regulate independent political expenditures by corporations,
7 unions, and wealthy individuals; and

8 WHEREAS, In fulfillment of this important role the government of the United States and
9 a majority of states have regulated and restricted independent political expenditures by
10 corporations; and

11 WHEREAS, In 2010, the Supreme Court of the United States decided by a bare majority
12 in Citizens United v. Federal Elections Commission that the First Amendment of the Constitution
13 of the United States prohibits restrictions on the use of corporate and union treasury funds for
14 electioneering; and

15 WHEREAS, Citizens United was a dramatic reversal of established Supreme Court
16 precedent, and overturned decades of statutes enacted by Congress and numerous state
17 legislatures; and

18 WHEREAS, Citizens United has served as precedent for further legal decisions harming
19 our democratic system of government, including SpeechNow.org v. FEC, which allows wealthy

1 individuals to anonymously channel unlimited political expenditures through Super PACs; and

2 WHEREAS, In the wake of Citizens United there has been an exponential increase in
3 large independent political expenditures by corporations and wealthy individuals which threatens
4 the integrity of the election process, corrupts our candidates, dilutes the power of individual
5 voters and distort the public discourse; and

6 WHEREAS, Article V of the United States Constitution empowers and obligates the
7 people of the United States of America to use the constitutional amendment process to amend
8 their constitution; now, therefore be it

9 RESOLVED, That this General Assembly of the State of Rhode Island and Providence
10 Plantations respectfully urges the Congress of the United States to pass and send to the states for
11 ratification an amendment to the constitution to effectively overturn the holding of Citizens
12 United and it's progeny and to permit the governments of the United States and the several states
13 to regulate and restrict independent political expenditures by corporations and wealthy
14 individuals; and be it further

15 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and he hereby is authorized and directed to
16 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United
17 States, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Minority Leader of the House of
18 Representatives, the Majority Leader of the United States Senate, the Minority Leader of the
19 United States Senate, and to each Senator and Representative from Rhode Island in the Congress
20 of the United States.

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