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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2017

HOUSE RESOLUTION

CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY AND ASSESS
EDUCATION MODULES FOR DIVORCING PARENTS

Introduced By: Representatives Regunberg, Walsh, Barros, Donovan, and Casimiro

Date Introduced: March 01, 2017

Referred To: House Judiciary

(by request)

1 WHEREAS, Research conclusively shows that the failure of divorced parents to co-
2 parent, cooperate, and communicate constructively for the benefit of their minor children has
3 harmful effects on both the parents and their children; and

4 WHEREAS, These harmful effects can include anxiety, depression, social withdrawal,
5 impaired school attendance and academic performance, reduced work productivity, substance
6 abuse, and self-harm, all of which impact public health and draw on social services and medical
7 services; and

8 WHEREAS, Effective co-parenting, communication, and collaboration between divorced
9 parents has been shown to reduce the risk of above-stated harmful effects; and

10 WHEREAS, The State of Rhode Island currently does not have a robust marketplace, in
11 either the public or private sector, of educational offerings for divorcing or divorced parents to
12 learn co-parenting, communication, and collaboration skills and practices; now, therefore be it

13 RESOLVED, That a special legislative commission be and the same is hereby created
14 consisting of nine (9) members: three (3) of whom shall be members of the Rhode Island House
15 of Representatives, not more than two (2) from the same political party, to be appointed by the
16 Speaker of the House; one of whom shall be a social worker experienced in dealing with families
17 of divorce, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; one of whom shall be a professional
18 writer/editor; to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; one of whom shall be a licensed
19 marriage/family therapist, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; one of whom shall be a

1 licensed adult psychologist or psychiatrist, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; one of
2 whom shall be a licensed adolescent psychologist or psychiatrist, to be appointed by the Speaker
3 of the House; and one of whom shall be a family law attorney, to be appointed by the Speaker of
4 the House.

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

10 The purpose of said commission shall be to make a comprehensive study and assess
11 education modules for divorcing parents that shall include:

12 Researching educational modules on parenting through and after divorce, offered both
13 regionally (i.e., New England) and nationally including, any academic or peer-reviewed studies
14 regarding the efficacy of educational modules on parenting through and after divorce;

15 Evaluating a variety of educational modules based on style, curriculum, pedagogical
16 approach, length of class, duration of overall programming, and format (including but not limited
17 to: online modules; prerecorded video modules; and in-person classes, seminars, and/or
18 workshops);

19 Conclusions on what educational modules are or would be most effective in promoting
20 effective co-parenting or parallel parenting, collaboration, and communication between divorcing
21 parents including, judgments of module efficacy for divorcing couples exhibiting low, medium,
22 and high levels of conflict;

23 Recommendations on any available supplemental programming or educational modules
24 for the entire family: i.e., the minor children of the divorcing parents as well as the parents
25 themselves;

26 Making recommendations on how a robust marketplace of the best and most efficacious
27 educational modules for divorcing parents could be developed in the state of Rhode Island; and

28 Any other relevant information or recommendations pertaining to this topic.

29 Forthwith upon passage of this resolution, the members of the commission shall meet at
30 the call of the Speaker of the House and organize and shall select a chairperson from among the
31 legislators.

32 Vacancies in said commission shall be filled in like manner as the original appointment.

33 The membership of said commission shall receive no compensation for their services.

34 All departments and agencies of the state shall furnish such advice and information,

1 documentary and otherwise, to said commission and its agents as is deemed necessary or
2 desirable by the commission to facilitate the purposes of this resolution.

3 The Speaker of the House is hereby authorized and directed to provide suitable quarters
4 for said commission; and be it further

5 RESOLVED, That the commission shall report its findings and recommendations to the
6 House of Representatives no later than January 27, 2018, and said commission shall expire on
7 March 27, 2018.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
HOUSE RESOLUTION
CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY AND ASSESS
EDUCATION MODULES FOR DIVORCING PARENTS

1 This resolution would create a nine (9) member special legislative study commission
2 whose purpose it would be to make a comprehensive study and assessment of the most effective
3 education modules for divorcing parents and how they may be implemented in the State of Rhode
4 Island, and who would report back to the House of Representatives no later than January 27,
5 2018, and whose life would expire on March 27, 2018.

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