

2018 -- S 2436

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2018

SENATE RESOLUTION

CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY THE NEED AND/OR
FEASIBILITY OF IMPLEMENTING A PUBLICLY FUNDED CAMPAIGN OPTION FOR
GENERAL ASSEMBLY CANDIDATES

Introduced By: Senators Sheehan, Jabour, Kettle, Nesselbush, and Calkin

Date Introduced: February 15, 2018

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

1 WHEREAS, Nationwide, some states allow candidates to use public funds while
2 campaigning for state offices. In order to receive these public funds for their campaigns,
3 candidates must meet state requirements and agree to adhere to certain restrictions and spending
4 limits. The methods of collecting and distributing funds for these public financing programs vary
5 widely; and

6 WHEREAS, According to Section 10 of the Rhode Island Constitution, entitled
7 "Limitations on campaign contributions - Public financing of campaign expenditures of general
8 officers" "The general assembly shall adopt limitations on all contributions to candidates for
9 election to state and local office in any primary, general or special election and shall provide for
10 the adoption of a plan of voluntary public financing and limitations on total campaign
11 expenditures of campaigns for governor and such other general officers as the general assembly
12 shall specify"; and

13 WHEREAS, In addition, chapter 25 of title 17, of the Rhode Island General Laws states
14 that candidates for Rhode Island statewide offices (governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of
15 state, general treasurer or attorney general) may apply for and qualify to use public funds with
16 certain requirements and restrictions; and

17 WHEREAS, Thus, currently in Rhode Island, General Assembly members do not qualify
18 for a public campaign financing option; now, therefore be it

19 RESOLVED, That a special legislative commission be and the same is hereby created

1 consisting of seven (7) members; three (3) of whom shall be members of the Senate, not more
2 than two (2) form the same political party, to be appointed by the President of the Senate; one of
3 whom shall be the Executive Director of the Board of Elections, or designee; one of whom shall
4 be the Attorney General, or designee; one of whom shall be the Secretary of State, or designee;
5 and one of whom shall be the President of Rhode Island Common Cause, or designee.

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

11 The purpose of said commission shall be to study the need and/or feasibility of enacting
12 and implementing a public campaign financing option for General Assembly candidates.

13 Forthwith upon passage of this resolution, the members of the commission shall meet at
14 the call of the President of the Senate and organize and shall select, from among the legislators, a
15 chairperson.

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

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

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

21 The Joint Committee on Legislative Services is hereby authorized and directed to provide
22 suitable quarters for said commission; and be it further

23 RESOLVED, That the commission shall report its findings and recommendations to the
24 Senate no later than February 5, 2019, and said commission shall expire on May 5, 2019.

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