

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2020

J O I N T R E S O L U T I O N

**TO APPROVE AND PUBLISH AND SUBMIT TO THE ELECTORS A PROPOSITION OF
AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE**

Introduced By: Senator Samuel W. Bell

Date Introduced: February 27, 2020

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

1 RESOLVED, That a majority of all members elected to each house of the general
2 assembly voting therefor, the following amendments to the Constitution of the state be proposed
3 to the qualified electors of the state in accordance with the provisions of Article XIV of the
4 Constitution, for their approval and the following sections are hereby amended, effective on
5 January 1, 2021, to read as follows:

ARTICLE VI

OF THE LEGISLATIVE POWER

Section 16. Borrowing power of general assembly.

9 (a) The general assembly shall approve all debt that pledges the general obligation of the
10 state.

11 (b) The general assembly shall have no powers, without the express consent of the
12 people, to incur state debts to an amount exceeding fifty thousand dollars, except in time of war,
13 or in case of insurrection or invasion; nor shall it in any case, without such consent, pledge the
14 faith of the state for the payment of the obligations of others. This section shall not be construed
15 to refer to any money that may be deposited with the state by the government of the United
16 States.

17 (c) The general assembly shall have no power, without the consent of the people, to fail
18 to make an appropriation to fully fund actuarially required contributions to any state pension
19 fund.

1 (d) The general assembly shall have no power, without the consent of the people, to make
2 an appropriation for payment for bonds issued pursuant to a public-private partnership, or for
3 private-activity bonds, or bonds issued by a public corporation, or any bonds not subject to a
4 pledge of the general obligation of the state.

5 RESOLVED, That the said proposition of amendments shall be submitted to the electors
6 for their approval or rejection at the next statewide general election. The voting places in the
7 several cities and towns shall be kept open during the hours required by law for voting therein for
8 general officers of the state; and be it further

9 RESOLVED, That the secretary of state shall cause the said proposition of amendments
10 to be published as a part of this resolution in the newspapers of the state prior to the date of the
11 said meetings of the said electors; and the said proposition shall be inserted in the warrants or
12 notices to be issued previous to said meetings of the electors for the purpose of warning the town,
13 ward, or district meetings, and said proposition shall be read by the town, ward, or district
14 meetings to be held as aforesaid; and be it further

15 RESOLVED, That the town, ward, and district meetings to be held aforesaid shall be -
16 warned, and the list of voters shall be canvassed and made up, and the said town, ward, and
17 district meetings shall be conducted in the same manner as now provided by law for the town,
18 ward, and district meetings for the election of general officers of the state.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

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1 This act would provide for a joint resolution to approve and publish a proposition for a
2 constitutional amendment which specifies that all debt that pledges the general obligation of the
3 state be approved by the general assembly. This proposed constitutional amendment would also
4 require voter approval for appropriations less than the actuarially required contributions to any
5 state pension fund or for payment on any bond not subject to a pledge of the general obligation of
6 the state.

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