

2012 -- S 2541

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2012

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SENATE RESOLUTION

URGING STATE AGENCIES TO CONSIDER USING OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE

Introduced By: Senators Pichardo, Ruggerio, Goodwin, Metts, and Miller

Date Introduced: February 28, 2012

Referred To: Senate Corporations

1           WHEREAS, Open Source Software is computer software that is available in source code  
2 form. The source code and certain other rights normally reserved for copyright holders are  
3 provided under a free software license that permits users to study, change, improve, and, at times,  
4 also to distribute the software; and

5           WHEREAS, There are many benefits Open Source Software offers state agencies,  
6 including reliability, stability, cost, and freedom; and

7           WHEREAS, In a closed source software environment, when there is a defect with the  
8 software, delays can come between the vendors of the software and the users who are  
9 experiencing the defect. The delays are due to the defect reports that need to be filed with the  
10 closed source software. Once filed, a decision needs to be made by the vendor on whether or not  
11 to issue an update for the software; and

12           WHEREAS, In an Open Source Software environment, because of the availability of  
13 source code, a severe or minor defect can be repaired within a matter of hours of its detection.  
14 Able developers of the Open Source Software are also able to fix it, as well as report and issue an  
15 update on their own authority. The user of the Open Source Software can choose whether to use  
16 the update or use the repaired version of the program. That, in turn, increases the reliability  
17 standard of the Open Source Software; and

18           WHEREAS, In a closed source environment, as software ages, support for the software  
19 tends to become unavailable. If there is no compatibility software released so that the old versions  
20 of the program can be used with updated versions, new, expensive, and potentially error

1 stricken software may need to be purchased; and

2           WHEREAS, In an Open Source Software environment, the need to constantly purchase  
3 upgraded software is virtually mitigated because the source code is easily assessable. As newer  
4 Open Source Software is released, so are compatible drivers for the old software, so that the old  
5 software can keep operating and the user once again has a choice to upgrade to the newer version;  
6 and

7           WHEREAS, In addition to having to purchase newer programs in a closed source  
8 software environment, an agency may have to purchase multiple licenses for the program to be  
9 installed in multiple computers. This can become extremely costly; and

10           WHEREAS, In an Open Source Software environment, much of the software is available  
11 for free, and the need to purchase multiple licenses for multiple installations is eliminated; and

12           WHEREAS, Rhode Island's state agencies must consider every option for decreasing  
13 costs and increasing efficiencies; now, therefore be it

14           RESOLVED That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations  
15 hereby urges all state agencies to consider using Open Source Software to support their  
16 operations; and be it further

17           RESOLVED, That the Secretary of the State be and he hereby is authorized and directed  
18 to transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to all directors of Rhode Island state agencies  
19 and departments.

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