

**2013 -- H 6236**

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LC02748  
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**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND**

**IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2013**

**J O I N T   R E S O L U T I O N**

**CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO BE KNOWN AS THE  
"BROADBAND POLICY ADVISORY BOARD"**

Introduced By: Representatives Finn, Edwards, Kazarian, Marcello, and Kennedy

Date Introduced: June 13, 2013

Referred To: House Corporations

1           WHEREAS, Broadband, also known as the high-speed internet, has become  
2 indispensable to the flow of commerce, communications, government services, and public safety,  
3 and for gathering and exchanging information from infinite sources on every subject; and

4           WHEREAS, Access to the internet has become as essential to full participation in daily  
5 life as electricity and telephone service; and

6           WHEREAS, Rhode Island is currently recognized as having the best broadband  
7 infrastructure speed and coverage in the nation and we have the ability to connect almost every  
8 citizen and business to high-speed Internet; and

9           WHEREAS, The Federal Government authored the comprehensive National Broadband  
10 Plan that validates high-speed broadband Internet as a major driver of economic development in  
11 the 21st century; and

12           WHEREAS, The Federal Government and other organizations across the nation are  
13 making investments in broadband infrastructure and programs to promote digital literacy and  
14 broadband adoption; and

15           WHEREAS, Over 41 out of 50 states have established such recognized advisory councils  
16 to address these issues in their states; and

17           WHEREAS, Many United States cities and towns are also evaluating and implementing  
18 the next generation of broadband technology known as Gigabit Networks which would quickly  
19 surpass current technologies, thrusting them into the forefront of economic development and

1 education opportunities; now, therefore be it

2           RESOLVED, That a special legislative commission to be known as the Broadband Policy  
3 and Advisory Board be and the same is hereby created consisting of sixteen (16) members: one of  
4 whom shall be a member of the House of Representatives, to be appointed by the Speaker; one of  
5 whom shall be a member of the Senate, to be appointed by the President of the Senate; one of  
6 whom shall be the Chair of the Rhode Island Board of Education, or designee; one of whom shall  
7 be the Commissioner for the Office of Energy Resources, or designee; one of whom shall be the  
8 Rhode Island Secretary of State, or designee; one of whom shall be the Colonel of the State  
9 Police, or designee; one of whom shall be the Director of the Rhode Island Department of Labor  
10 and Training, or designee; one of whom shall be the Director of the Rhode Island Department of  
11 Health, or designee; one of whom shall be the Rhode Island Attorney General, or designee; one of  
12 whom shall be the Chairman of the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation; one of  
13 whom shall be the Director of Broadband RI, or designee; one of whom shall be the Executive  
14 Director of the Rhode Island Library Association, or designee; and four (4) of whom shall be  
15 representatives of the state's broadband industry, two (2) of whom shall be appointed by the  
16 Speaker of the House, and two (2) of whom shall be appointed by the President of the Senate.

17           In lieu of any appointment of a member of the legislature to a permanent advisory  
18 commission, a legislative study commission, or any commission created by a General Assembly  
19 resolution, the appointing authority may appoint a member of the general public to serve in lieu  
20 of a legislator, provided that the majority leader or the minority leader of the political party which  
21 is entitled to the appointment consents to the appointment of the member of the general public.

22           The purpose of said Board is to begin by leveraging resources of the current federally-  
23 funded Broadband RI initiative along with development of a comprehensive strategic plan,  
24 including specific action steps and identified responsible parties for said action steps. The plan  
25 would include, but not be limited to: Creating a sustainable coordinating effort between the public  
26 and private sectors to maximize economic development opportunities for businesses and citizens  
27 through Rhode Island's competitive position of broadband access and utilization; Investigating,  
28 reviewing, and reporting on various federal and private funding sources available for Rhode  
29 Island in enhancing broadband access and utilization; Reviewing potential public policy  
30 initiatives, policies, and programs, including best practices, to advance Rhode Island's use of  
31 broadband for economic, cultural, and social advancement; Reviewing current and pending  
32 legislative, regulatory, and administrative actions to determine and advise on their impact on  
33 Rhode Island's broadband strategies; Recommending e-government strategies for Rhode Island to  
34 enhance the delivery and implementation of government strategies in the state.

1           Forthwith upon passage of this resolution, the members of the commission shall meet at  
2 the call of the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House and organize. The President  
3 of the Senate and the Speaker of the House shall each select one member to serve as co-  
4 chairpersons of the commission.

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

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

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

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

12          RESOLVED, That the commission shall report preliminary findings and results to the  
13 General Assembly on or before February 4, 2014, and said commission shall expire on January 6,  
14 2015.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
JOINT RESOLUTION  
CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO BE KNOWN AS THE  
"BROADBAND POLICY ADVISORY BOARD"

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1           This resolution would create a sixteen (16) member special legislative commission to be  
2 known as the Broadband Policy and Advisory Board and whose purpose would be to make a  
3 comprehensive study of methods and avenues to pursue that would support and aid the  
4 development of broadband opportunities and benefits, and who would report preliminary findings  
5 to the General Assembly on or before February 4, 2014, and said commission would expire on  
6 January 6, 2015.

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