

2021 -- H 5953

LC002108

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

HOUSE RESOLUTION

CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY THE LOW AND MODERATE INCOME HOUSING ACT

Introduced By: Representatives Speakman, Shekarchi, Kislak, Morales, Potter, Alzate, Williams, Knight, Donovan, and Henriess

Date Introduced: February 26, 2021

Referred To: House Municipal Government & Housing

1 WHEREAS, Rhode Island’s Low and Moderate Income Housing Act requires that
2 housing in twenty-nine of Rhode Island’s communities be comprised of at least 10 percent
3 “affordable” housing. Ten communities are exempt due to their percentage of rental housing
4 and/or current affordable housing inventory; and

5 WHEREAS, To date, out of those twenty-nine cities and towns, only New Shoreham has
6 met the target, and only five of the state's total 39 cities and towns: Central Falls, Newport, New
7 Shoreham, Providence and Woonsocket, have met the mandate threshold, with many of the state's
8 cities and towns seemingly disregarding the benchmark; and

9 WHEREAS, There exists a high concentration of poverty in the cities of Central Falls,
10 Providence, Pawtucket, and Woonsocket; and

11 WHEREAS, There is a paramount need for millennial housing for young professionals to
12 stabilize and grow cities such as Central Falls, yet there are very few affordable home ownership
13 opportunities, and the majority of housing consists of rental units in triple-deckers owned by
14 absentee landlords; and

15 WHEREAS, According to the Housing Works Report, across the United States, 47.5
16 percent of Latino households own their own homes, but in Rhode Island, according to the 2018
17 State of Hispanic Homeownership Report, that number is drastically lower at 27.73 percent; and

18 WHEREAS, Rhode Island also has one of the lowest non-white homeownership rates in
19 the United States and of the State’s overall total homeownership rate of 61.8 percent, only

1 approximately half that number is non-whites. Rhode Island was ranked as the 44th lowest state
2 in the nation for existing homeownership disparity by PROSPERITY NOW; and

3 WHEREAS, Although redlining, the practice of limiting lending in certain
4 neighborhoods regardless of the individual's creditworthiness, is banned by federal law, it
5 continues to plague our state's minority neighborhoods; and

6 WHEREAS, It is essential that these institutional practices, discriminatory actions, and
7 public policies be addressed and that solutions be found; now, therefore be it

8 RESOLVED, That a special legislative commission be and the same is hereby created
9 consisting of sixteen (16) members: three (3) of whom shall be members of the Rhode Island
10 House of Representatives, not more than two (2) from the same political party, to be appointed by
11 the Speaker of the House; one of whom shall be the President of the RI Builders Association, or
12 designee; one of whom shall be the Executive Director of Rhode Island Housing, or designee; one
13 of whom shall be the President of the Housing Network of Rhode Island, or designee; one of
14 whom shall be the Executive Director of Grow Smart RI, or designee; one of whom shall be the
15 Chief Executive Officer of the Rhode Island Association of Realtors, or designee; one of whom
16 shall be the Executive Director of the Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless, or designee; four
17 (4) of whom shall be members of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, two (2) of whom
18 shall be residents of a Rhode Island city or town with a population of 35,000 or more residents,
19 and two (2) of whom shall be residents of a Rhode Island city or town with a population of less
20 than 35,000 residents, all of whom shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House; one of whom
21 shall be the Executive Director of Pawtucket-Central Falls Development, or designee; one of
22 whom shall be the President and CEO of the Rhode Island Foundation, or designee; and one of
23 whom shall be from One Neighborhood Builders, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House.

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

29 The purpose of said commission shall be to make a comprehensive study of the Rhode
30 Island Low and Moderate Income Housing Act including, but not limited to a review of:

- 31 1. State-wide data for low and moderate income housing by city and town;
- 32 2. Cities' and towns' strategic economic and housing plans;
- 33 3. The Brookings Institute reports and other relevant data referencing affordable housing;
- 34 and

1 4. Cities' and towns' compliance, performance, and barriers to implementation; and

2 The commission shall provide recommendations for aiding cities and towns to
3 successfully meet requirements of the Act.

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

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

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

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

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

14 RESOLVED, That the commission shall report its findings and recommendations to the
15 House of Representatives no later than December 16, 2021, and said commission shall expire on
16 April 17, 2022.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
HOUSE RESOLUTION
CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY THE LOW AND
MODERATE INCOME HOUSING ACT

1 This resolution would create a sixteen (16) member special legislative study commission
2 whose purpose it would be to make a comprehensive study on implementation of the Low and
3 Moderate Income Housing Act in the State of Rhode Island, and who would report back to the
4 House of Representatives no later than December 16, 2021, and whose life would expire on April
5 17, 2022.

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