

2023 -- H 5353

LC001266

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2023

HOUSE RESOLUTION

CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO EXAMINE AND MAKE
RECOMMENDATIONS TO COMBAT THE RISING THREAT OF TARGETED VIOLENCE
AGAINST FAITH COMMUNITIES

Introduced By: Representatives Fenton-Fung, Shallcross Smith, Biah, and Cotter

Date Introduced: February 03, 2023

Referred To: House Health & Human Services

1 WHEREAS, Rhode Island was historically the first colony to be founded upon and
2 governed by the principles of religious liberty and freedom; and

3 WHEREAS, In recent years, a troubling and divisive pattern of increased aggression and
4 violence against faith communities has substantially escalated; and

5 WHEREAS, It is essential that police, businesses, individuals and law makers at all
6 levels, develop a framework to establish ways to educate, prevent, and ultimately alleviate this
7 violence against faith communities; now, therefore be it

8 RESOLVED, That a special legislative commission be and the same is hereby created
9 consisting of fifteen (15) 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 Chair of the Rhode Island Commission on
12 Prejudice and Bias, or designee; one of whom shall be the Colonel of the Rhode Island State
13 Police, or designee; one of whom shall be the President of the Rhode Island Police Chiefs'
14 Association, or designee; six (6) of whom shall be community faith leaders, one each representing
15 the Jewish, Roman Catholic, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Sikh, and Protestant faith communities, to
16 be appointed by the Speaker of the House; one of whom shall be a member of the leadership of
17 the International Brotherhood of Police Officers (IBPO), to be appointed by the Speaker of the
18 House; one of whom shall be a member of the leadership of the Fraternal Order of Police, to be
19 appointed by the Speaker of the House; and one of whom shall be the Rhode Island Attorney

1 General, or designee.

2 In lieu of any appointment of a member of the legislature to a legislative study
3 commission, the appointing authority may appoint a member of the general public to serve in lieu
4 of a legislator; provided that, the majority leader or the minority leader of the political party
5 which is entitled to the appointment consents to the member of the general public.

6 The purpose of said commission shall be to examine and provide recommendations to
7 combat the rising threat of targeted violence against faith communities including, but not limited
8 to:

9 • Research and analyze statewide trends, relevant risk factors, and stressors related to
10 targeted violence and prevention against faith communities;

11 • Examine methods and policies to establish or enhance state-wide capabilities to prevent
12 targeted violence against faith communities;

13 • Develop a robust and sustainable local prevention framework against targeted violence
14 against faith communities;

15 • Assess procedures to address online aspects of targeted violence against faith
16 communities; and

17 • Examine, investigate and provide recommendations for potential methods to fund,
18 establish and enhance training, increase public and societal awareness, and develop partnerships
19 across every level of the government, the private sector, and in local communities to address
20 violence against faith communities.

21 Forthwith upon passage of this resolution, the members of the commission shall meet at
22 the call of the Speaker of the House and organize and shall select a Chairperson from among the
23 legislators.

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

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

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

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

31 RESOLVED, That the commission shall report its findings and recommendations to the
32 House of Representatives no later than February 7, 2024, and said commission shall expire on

1 May 7, 2024.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
HOUSE RESOLUTION
CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO EXAMINE AND MAKE
RECOMMENDATIONS TO COMBAT THE RISING THREAT OF TARGETED VIOLENCE
AGAINST FAITH COMMUNITIES

- 1 This resolution would create a fifteen (15) member special legislative commission whose
- 2 purpose it would be to examine and make recommendations to combat the rising threat of
- 3 targeted violence against faith communities, and who would report back to the House of
- 4 Representatives no later than February 7, 2024, and whose life would expire on May 7, 2024.

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