

2023 -- H 6422

LC002903

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2023

HOUSE RESOLUTION

CREATING A LEGISLATIVE STUDY COMMISSION TO EVALUATE AND PROVIDE
RECOMMENDATIONS ON MANDATED SAFETY PROTOCOLS FOR RHODE ISLAND
SCHOOLS

Introduced By: Representatives Boylan, Stewart, McNamara, Cruz, Knight, Tanzi,
Felix, Alzate, Donovan, and Spears

Date Introduced: May 19, 2023

Referred To: House Education

1 WHEREAS, Gunfire on school grounds takes many forms and mirrors the problem of
2 gun violence in the United States; and

3 WHEREAS, Numerous schools in Rhode Island received "swatting" calls over the past
4 year. Swatting can result in sending a police or emergency service response team to a school, and
5 can result in a lockdown event. During and in the aftermath of a school swatting event, students
6 and teachers may experience trauma and have difficulty returning to a normal routine after the
7 event; now, therefore be it

8 RESOLVED, That a special legislative commission be and the same is hereby created
9 consisting of twenty (20) members: four (4) of whom shall be members of the House of
10 Representatives, not more than three (3) from the same political party, to be appointed by the
11 Speaker of the House; one of whom shall be the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary
12 Education, or designee; one of whom shall be the President of the Rhode Island School
13 Superintendents Association, or designee; one of whom shall be the President of the Rhode Island
14 Association of School principals, or designee; one of whom shall be the President of the Rhode
15 Island Chapter of the American Federation of Teachers, or designee; one of whom shall be the
16 President of the Rhode Island Chapter of the National Education Association, or designee; one of
17 whom shall be the Rhode Island Attorney General, or designee; one of whom shall be a Rhode
18 Island school psychologist, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; one of whom shall be a
19 member of the National Association of Social Workers, Rhode Island Chapter, who is employed

1 in a Rhode Island public school, to be appointed be the Speaker of the House; one of whom shall
2 be the President of the Rhode Island PTA, or designee; one of whom shall be the President of the
3 Rhode Island Association of Fire Chiefs, Inc., or designee; one of whom shall be the Rhode
4 Island Child Advocate, or designee; two (2) of whom shall be Rhode Island high school students,
5 one of whom attends a suburban school district and one of whom attends an urban school district,
6 to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; one of whom shall be a special needs educator,
7 employed in a Rhode Island public school, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; one of
8 whom shall be the Executive Director the RI Police Chiefs' Association, or designee; and one of
9 whom shall be the Rhode Island State Police School Safety Commissioner, or designee.

10 In lieu of any appointment of a member of the legislature to a legislative study
11 commission, or any commission created by a General Assembly resolution, the appointing
12 authority may appoint a member of the general public to serve in lieu of a legislator, provided that
13 the majority leader or the minority leader of the political party which is entitled to the
14 appointment consents to the appointment of the member of the general public.

15 The purpose of said commission shall be to determine what changes, if any, need to be
16 made in Rhode Island General Law 16-21-4 in light of the national landscape of school shootings
17 as well as recent swatting events. This study shall include, but not be limited to, evaluation of:

18 • Should the number of drills dictated in RI 16-21-4 be changed and if so, what should
19 they change to?

20 • Whether lockdown drills during school hours should include simulations that mimic an
21 actual incident;

22 • Should parents have advance notice of lockdown drills. Currently, no notice that
23 includes the exact time of the lockdown drill is required;

24 • Should a lockdown drill be announced to students and educators prior to its start;

25 • Should schools create age and developmentally appropriate lockdown drill content with
26 the involvement of school personnel, including school-based mental health professionals;

27 • Should schools couple drills, as well as lock down events, with trauma-informed
28 approaches to address students' wellbeing both during the drills, and over a sustained period and
29 if so, how can that approach be implemented;

30 • During actual lockdowns, what enforcements are necessary so that personal do not
31 ignore the lockdown;

32 • During actual lockdowns, should an evacuation option be available to students; and

33 • Should the frequency of mandatory emergency egress drills (fire drills) be changed
34 from one per month to some reduced number of drills per academic school year as these drills

1 may be traumatizing; and

2 • Are there any additional steps that school administrators can take to minimize trauma
3 around all the drills as well as any lockdown events.

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

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

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

10 RESOLVED, That the commission shall report its findings and recommendations to the
11 House of Representatives no later than February 28, 2024, and said commission shall expire on
12 April 30, 2024.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
HOUSE RESOLUTION
CREATING A LEGISLATIVE STUDY COMMISSION TO EVALUATE AND PROVIDE
RECOMMENDATIONS ON MANDATED SAFETY PROTOCOLS FOR RHODE ISLAND
SCHOOLS

1 This resolution would create a twenty (20) member legislative commission whose
2 purpose it would be to evaluate and provide recommendations on mandated safety protocols for
3 RI schools, and who would report back to the House no later than February 28, 2024, and whose
4 life would expire on April 30, 2024.

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