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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2024

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A N A C T

RELATING TO PUBLIC PROPERTY AND WORKS -- PUBLIC BUILDINGS

Introduced By: Representative Samuel A. Azzinaro

Date Introduced: February 09, 2024

Referred To: House State Government & Elections

(Dept. of Administration)

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 37-8-8 of the General Laws in Chapter 37-8 entitled "Public
2 Buildings" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **37-8-8. Battle flags and markers.**

4 (a) The priceless battle flags and markers now belonging to the state of Rhode Island, and
5 any that may hereafter be presented to this state, shall be maintained by the department of
6 administration in ~~embellished~~ appropriate cases suitable for their display or presentation in ~~the halls~~
7 ~~or foyers of~~ the State House, and the cases shall be practically hermetically sealed for the purpose
8 of protecting and preserving the battle flags and markers for future generations as the most eloquent
9 testimonials of the patriotism and valor of our fathers. The battle flags and markers shall ~~not~~ be
10 removed from ~~the cases for any purpose other than for their necessary repair or preservation~~ their
11 State House display encasements for the purpose of conservation and preservation until appropriate
12 storage and display cases have been created and a permanent storage facility within the State of
13 Rhode Island has been designated. The department of administration shall have full care, custody,
14 and control of all the battle flags and markers, and the department is hereby authorized and directed
15 to carry out and enforce the provisions and purposes of this section.

16 (b) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the department of administration is
17 authorized to remove, conserve, and indefinitely store any battle flag or marker it deems to be in
18 such a state of deterioration that its removal from the State House encasements is necessary for its
19 continued existence.

1 (c) The department of administration is ~~directed to study the condition of the State House~~
2 ~~historic battle flags and markers, the encasements in which they are housed and their method of~~
3 ~~display to ensure their continued survival while permitting, to the extent possible, continued public~~
4 ~~display of these historic artifacts. In conducting such study, the department shall seek input and~~
5 ~~guidance from persons with expertise in historic preservation, textile conservation, veterans' affairs~~
6 ~~and military history, as well as from members of the public. The department shall prepare a~~
7 ~~comprehensive set of recommendations for the conservation and display of these battle flags and~~
8 ~~markers. The department shall present its findings and recommendations to the governor, the~~
9 ~~speaker of the house, and the president of the senate not later than January 1, 2017.~~

10 ~~(d) The department is authorized to apply for and accept public or private funds to carry~~
11 ~~out this study and for the continued preservation and display of these battle flags and markers.~~
12 authorized to apply for and accept public or private funds for the continued preservation and display
13 of the battle flags and markers. The department of administration is also authorized to enter into an
14 agreement with a state or federally approved agency or museum for the temporary loan and display
15 of a battle flag(s) or marker(s), when insured with a bond against damage or loss, when such loan
16 will enhance the existing conditions of the flag(s) or marker(s) not currently provided through
17 preservation contracts, or when such loan will promote the further education and public awareness
18 of the valor of Rhode Island's veterans.

19 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

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1 This act would allow the department of administration to temporarily loan the state battle
2 flags and markers to approved federal or state agencies under the condition that such loan is insured
3 by bond against damage or loss, including when such loan is intended to enhance the existing
4 conditions of the historic flags and markers, or when such loan will promote the further education
5 and public awareness of the valor of Rhode Island's veterans.

6 This act would take effect upon passage.

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