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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2015

SENATE RESOLUTION

RESPECTFULLY URGING CONGRESS TO RESTORE FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS IN
THE UNITED STATES

Introduced By: Senators Ottiano, Conley, Lombardo, and Lombardi

Date Introduced: April 01, 2015

Referred To: Senate Special Legislation and Veterans Affairs

(by request)

1 WHEREAS, The 1st President of the United States George Washington stated, "The
2 basis of our political systems is the right of the people to make and to alter their Constitutions of
3 Government"; and

4 WHEREAS, It was the stated intention of the framers of the Constitution of the United
5 States of America that the Congress of the United States of America should be "dependent on the
6 people alone." (James Madison, Federalist 52); and

7 WHEREAS, That dependency has evolved from a dependency on the people alone to a
8 dependency on those who spend excessively in elections, through campaigns or third-party
9 groups; and

10 WHEREAS, The United States Supreme Court ruling in Citizens United v. Federal
11 Election Commission, 558 U.S. 310 (2010) removed restrictions on amounts of independent
12 political spending; and

13 WHEREAS, The removal of those restrictions has resulted in the unjust influence of
14 powerful economic forces, which have supplanted the will of the people by undermining our
15 ability to choose our political leadership, write our own laws, and determine the fate of our state;
16 and

17 WHEREAS, Article V of the United States Constitution requires the United States
18 Congress to call a convention for proposing amendments upon application of two-thirds of the
19 legislatures of the several states for the purpose of proposing amendments to the United States

1 Constitution; now, therefore be it

2 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
3 hereby sees the need for a convention to propose amendments in order to address concerns such
4 as those raised by the decision of the United States Supreme Court in Citizens United v. Federal
5 Election Commission and related cases and events including those occurring long before or
6 afterward or for a substantially similar purpose, and desires that said convention should be so
7 limited; and be it further

8 RESOLVED, That this Senate hereby respectfully requests that the delegates to said
9 convention be comprised equally of individuals currently elected to state and local office, or be
10 selected by election, in each Congressional district for the purpose of serving as delegates, though
11 all individuals elected or appointed to federal office, now or in the past, be prohibited from
12 serving as delegates to the Convention, and furthermore requests the ability to restrict or expand
13 the power of its delegates within the limits expressed above; and be it further

14 RESOLVED, That this Senate hereby intends that this be a continuing application
15 considered together with applications calling for a convention passed in the 2013-2014 Vermont
16 legislature as R454, the 2013-2014 California legislature as Resolution Chapter 77, the 2013-
17 2014 Illinois legislature as Senate Joint Resolution No. 42, and all other passed, pending, and
18 future applications, the aforementioned concerns of Rhode Island notwithstanding until such time
19 as two-thirds of the several states have applied for a Convention and said Convention is convened
20 by Congress; and be it further

21 RESOLVED, That the citizenry of the State of Rhode Island, speaking through this
22 Senate, and pursuant to Article V of the United States Constitution, hereby petitions the United
23 States Congress to call a Convention for the purpose of proposing Amendments to the
24 Constitution of the United States of America as soon as two-thirds of the several states have
25 applied for a Convention; and be it further

26 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
27 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the President of the United States; the Vice
28 President of the United States in his capacity as President of the United States Senate and
29 addressed to him at the office he maintains in the United States Capitol; the Speaker of the United
30 States House of Representatives, the Minority Leader of the United States House of
31 Representatives, the President Pro Tempore of the United States Senate, and the Rhode Island
32 Congressional Delegation.

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