

2020 -- H 7959

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LC005188
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2020

JOINT RESOLUTION

TO APPROVE AND PUBLISH AND SUBMIT TO THE ELECTORS A PROPOSITION
AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS FOR THE ROGER WILLIAMS PARK ZOO

Introduced By: Representatives Slater, Williams, Caldwell, Diaz, and Bennett

Date Introduced: March 04, 2020

Referred To: House Finance

1 SECTION 1. Findings.

2 Whereas, the Roger Williams Park Zoo brings in over half a million visitors each year,
3 including over two hundred thousand (200,000) visitors from out of state, contributing to over
4 fifty million dollars (\$50,000,000) in economic impact for Roger Williams Park, the city of
5 Providence and the state of Rhode Island; and

6 Whereas, the Roger Williams Park Zoo hosted nearly five thousand (5,000) Rhode Island
7 students for educational programs during and after school in 2018, and provided free and reduced
8 entry to ensure that students of all backgrounds had access to these camps and programs.

9 Whereas, unlike many zoos nationwide that receive dedicated state or local revenues, the
10 Roger Williams Park Zoo relies on entry fees and memberships for capital improvements.

11 Whereas, Rhode Island voters approved fifteen million dollars (\$15,000,000) for the Zoo
12 as part of the 2014 "Clean Water, Open Space and Healthy Communities" bond, which the Zoo
13 used promptly to build a brand new "Faces of the Rainforest" exhibit. The exhibit brought an
14 estimated thirty-six thousand six hundred fifty-seven (36,657) additional visitors to the Zoo in the
15 first year and demonstrated a positive return on investment by contributing fifteen million six
16 hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$15,650,000) in direct value to the local and state economy.

17 Whereas, the Zoo administration has collected over two thousand (2,000) signatures from
18 Rhode Island residents across the state on a petition requesting to put a bond question on the 2020
19 ballot that would seek bond funding for a new state-of-the-art visitor entrance to the zoo.

1 SECTION 2. Proposition to be submitted to the people.

2 At the general election to be held on the Tuesday next after the first Monday in
3 November 2020, there shall be submitted to the people ("people") of the state of Rhode Island
4 ("state"). For their approval or rejection, the following proposition:

5 "Shall the action of the general assembly, by an act passed at the January 2020 session,
6 authorizing the issuance of bonds, refunding bonds, and temporary notes of the state of Rhode
7 Island for the capital project and in the amount with respect to the project listed below be
8 approved, and the issuance of bonds, refunding bonds, and temporary notes authorized in
9 accordance with the provisions of said act?"

10 Approval of this question will allow the state of Rhode Island to issue general obligation
11 bonds, refunding bonds, and/or temporary notes in an amount not to exceed forty million dollars
12 (\$40,000,000) for a full renovation of the Roger Williams Park Zoo visitor entrance featuring new
13 ocean-themed exhibits. This project will increase economic impacts on Roger Williams Park, the
14 city of Providence and all of Rhode Island.

15 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect when and if the state board of elections shall
16 certify to the secretary of state that a majority of the qualified electors voting on the proposition
17 contained in section 2 hereof have indicated their approval of all or any projects thereunder.

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