



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR DANIEL J. MCKEE

March 19, 2026

The Honorable Evan P. Shanley
Chair, House Committee on State Government & Elections
Room 135, Rhode Island State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Re: *2026 – H 7387 Resolution to Approve and Publish and Submit to the Electors a Proposition of Amendment to the Constitution of the State – Line Item Veto*

Dear Chair Shanley:

The Administration writes to provide comment on H 7387, a Resolution to Approve and Publish and Submit to the Electors a Proposition of Amendment to the Constitution of the State – Line Item Veto (Resolution). As its title indicates, the Resolution would put forward a constitutional amendment for consideration by Rhode Island voters to adopt a version of the line-item veto.

The Governor's budget proposal for fiscal year 2027 includes an alternate line-item veto resolution, which is one of the Governor's major priorities to advance affordability and promote greater fiscal transparency. Without line-item veto, Rhode Island is an outlier—one of only six states lacking this important fiscal management tool. Yet, polling has shown that line-item veto has strong public support in Rhode Island, and its need is obvious. While the Governor's budget proposal undergoes roughly six months of vetting and public review, the General Assembly's final budget in 2025 was introduced, debated, and passed by both chambers in just ten days, or eight working days. That compressed process was one of the contributing reasons the Governor did not sign the FY2026 budget, which included multiple tax and fee increases he believed were not necessary or sufficiently vetted by the public. Rhode Islanders deserve a more transparent and accountable budgeting process. The line-item veto would allow the Governor to highlight specific provisions for reconsideration, compelling additional public debate on items that may be new, controversial, or unnecessary.

While the Administration strongly supports the adoption of the line-item veto, this Resolution, as drafted, differs from the Governor's proposal in several key aspects. First, this Resolution permits a veto override by "three-fifths of the members present and

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voting,” an inherent constitutional contradiction with article VI, section 11 of the Rhode Island Constitution, which separately requires the “assent of two-thirds of the members elected to each house of the general assembly . . . to every bill appropriating the public money or property for local or private purposes.” Three-fifths of present and voting members will necessarily be less than two-thirds of the House or Senate’s total members.

Second, the Resolution’s section (b)(1), which references only the Governor’s authority to “approve the bill,” appears to eliminate the Governor’s present ability to veto an appropriations act in its entirety. Consequently, should the Governor desire to veto an annual budget act, it would seem he would need to do so on an item-by-item basis pursuant to subsection (b)(3) until he has vetoed every item, after which the General Assembly would be required to reconsider each disapproved item “separately and individually,” a burdensome and impractical undertaking.

Finally, by failing to include the ability to both “reduce” and “eliminate” a sum of money, subsection (b)(2) introduces unnecessary and avoidable ambiguity. It should be clear that a reduction to zero dollars—i.e., an elimination of a sum—is included in the line-item veto authority.

The line-item veto proposal in Article 3, Section 1 of the Governor’s proposed FY2027 budget (H 7127) resolves the above issues, and the Administration would urge this Committee and the General Assembly to pass that version this session.

Sincerely,



Katherine E. Miller
Deputy Executive Counsel

cc: Honorable Members of the House Committee on State Government & Elections
Honorable David. J. Place
Nicole McCarty, Esq.