

2025 -- H 5207

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

HOUSE RESOLUTION

CONGRATULATING RESIDENT PHYSICIANS AND FELLOWS AFFILIATED WITH
BROWN UNIVERSITY ON THEIR SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGNS TO ORGANIZE UNIONS
AT RHODE ISLAND HOSPITAL-BROWN UNIVERSITY HEALTH AND CARE NEW
ENGLAND HOSPITALS

Introduced By: Representatives Stewart, Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Handy, Donovan,
Fogarty, Ajello, Morales, Kislak, and Cruz

Date Introduced: January 28, 2025

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, According to the Association of American Medical Colleges, 76 to 89
2 percent of medical school graduates leave school with an average of \$203,062 in total education
3 debt; and

4 WHEREAS, The journey to become a doctor does not conclude with earning a degree in
5 medicine; instead, it continues with a medical residency and further postgraduate training; and

6 WHEREAS, Resident physicians and fellows are licensed, employed, and practicing
7 medicine under supervision and mentorship, typically for three to seven years, through which
8 they gain invaluable hands-on medical expertise; and

9 WHEREAS, The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education has asserted that
10 residency programs must ensure that residents and fellows work in environments that support
11 patient safety, resident and fellow education, and physician well-being; and

12 WHEREAS, The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education has required
13 that clinical and educational work hours must be limited to no more than 80 hours per week,
14 averaged over a four-week period in an effort to foster safer educational environments; and

15 WHEREAS, Despite reforms, resident physicians and fellows who began their training
16 during the COVID-19 pandemic confronted uniquely challenging educational environments; and

17 WHEREAS, Nationwide, the adverse effects of the pandemic included sicker and more
18 patients, a national and local shortage of physicians, and effects that have continued long after the

1 pandemic subsided; and

2 WHEREAS, The U.S. healthcare system’s dependence on for-profit private insurance
3 companies has an out-sized influence on the working conditions of physicians and patient care;
4 and

5 WHEREAS, First-year physicians employed at both RIH-Brown University Health and at
6 Care New England hospitals currently make lower annual salaries than their counterparts who
7 have organized into a union at Boston Medical Center and Cambridge Health Alliance; and

8 WHEREAS, Resident physicians and fellows are cost burdened by higher cost-of-living,
9 including increasing rent, and by personally-incurred professional expenses such as board exams;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, The National Labor Relations Board ruled in 1999 that resident physicians
12 are employees entitled to the right to organize and collectively bargain; and

13 WHEREAS, In recognition of the aforementioned facts, resident physicians and fellows
14 across the United States have been organizing unions, and the number represented by the
15 Committee of Interns and Residents has doubled since 2019, to more than 34,000 as of January 1,
16 2025; and

17 WHEREAS, The unionization question went to a vote because Rhode Island Hospital-
18 Brown University Health and Care New England did not voluntarily recognize residents as a
19 union; now, therefore it be

20 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island hereby
21 honors and congratulates the Resident Physicians and Fellows with RIH-Brown University
22 Health and at Care New England Hospitals on their successful campaigns to organize unions
23 affiliated with the Committee of Interns and Residents under the Service Employees International
24 Union, and hopes, as one of just a few physician unions in the State of Rhode Island, their efforts
25 can help to remedy the on-going healthcare crisis in the State; 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 William Levesque MD, Laura Schwartz MD,
28 Diana Sibai MD, Felicia Sun MD, MPhil, Kit Quain MD, Brian Drury, MD, Taylor Walker MD,
29 MPH, CIR-SEIU President, Michel Horne, CIR-SEIU Organizer, Katie Coombs, CIR-SEIU
30 Organizer.

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