WHEREAS, An individual who a physician believes is in need of immediate care and
treatment and whose presence in the community would create an imminent likelihood of serious
harm by reason of mental disability may be held for up to seventy-two (72) hours for examination
and evaluation (“psychiatric hold”); and

WHEREAS, Due to the lack of inpatient psychiatric beds in the State of Rhode Island,
patients who are subject to psychiatric holds as a result of a visit to an acute care hospital
emergency department must stay in the emergency department for the duration of the psychiatric
hold; and

WHEREAS, It is medically inappropriate for psychiatric patients to be held in an acute
care hospital and/or an emergency department rather than be transferred to a psychiatric facility to
receive treatment for their illness; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That a special house commission be and the same is hereby created
consisting of three (3) members: two (2) of whom shall be appointed by the Speaker of the
House; and one of whom shall be appointed by the House Minority Leader.

The purpose of said commission shall be to make a comprehensive study of the
implications and consequences of psychiatric holds in hospital emergency departments.

Forthwith upon passage of this resolution, the members of the commission shall meet at
the call of the Speaker of the House and organize and shall select a chairperson. Vacancies in said
commission shall be filled in like manner as the original appointment.
The membership of said commission shall receive no compensation for their services.

All departments and agencies of the state, shall furnish such advice and information, documentary and otherwise, to said commission and its agents as is deemed necessary or desirable by the commission to facilitate the purposes of this resolution.

The Speaker of the House is hereby authorized and directed to provide suitable quarters for said commission; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the commission shall report is findings and recommendations to the House of Representatives no later than January 5, 2010, and said commission shall expire on March 5, 2010.

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LC02270
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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

HOUSE RESOLUTION
CREATING A SPECIAL HOUSE COMMISSION TO STUDY PSYCHIATRIC HOLDS IN HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS

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This resolution would create a three (3) member special House study commission whose purpose it would be to make a comprehensive study of the implications of psychiatric holds in hospital emergency departments, and who would report back to the House of Representatives no later than January 5, 2010, and whose life would expire on March 5, 2010.

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