

THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE
STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL

No. 49

Effective ~~XXXXXX~~ *Approved* January 30, 2012

WHEREAS, Since its founding in 1764, Providence, Rhode Island has been home to Brown University; and

WHEREAS, Brown University has grown and prospered, becoming one of the finest and most prestigious institutions of higher education in the nation; and

WHEREAS, Brown serves as a major center for arts and culture in Rhode Island and is a model of educational excellence; and

WHEREAS, With more than four thousand full-time employees, Brown is one of the largest employers in the state; and

WHEREAS, The students, faculty, and staff of Brown University make up a significant and important part of our city; and

WHEREAS, Through its Center for Public Service and many other university run programs, Brown students volunteer and give back to their community; and

WHEREAS, In its official charter, granted to the university by the General Assembly and the Colonial Governor, Brown was granted a blanket property tax exemption for all its properties, regardless whether the property is being used to further the school's educational mission; and

WHEREAS, According university and City of Providence tax assessment records, Brown owns 54 properties worth nearly \$144 million that do not contribute to the university's mission or would otherwise be taxable, if not for the tax exemption in the charter; and

WHEREAS, If the charter did not include this blanket exemption, the above mentioned properties would generate \$4.6 million in tax revenue annually for the City of Providence; and

WHEREAS, As tax exempt institutions like Brown expand, they remove properties from the tax rolls, leaving the City with less revenue and fewer places for profitable, taxable businesses to grow; and

WHEREAS, According to the United States Census Bureau, more than 25% of Providence residents now live below the poverty line; and

WHEREAS, In 2010, Rhode Island's homelessness rate reached its highest level ever, with more than four thousand people staying in homeless shelters, a 29% increase from 2009; and

WHEREAS, The combination of a worldwide recession, a nationwide foreclosure crisis, and a local tax base that is rapidly shrinking due to the expansion of tax exempts is a recipe for disaster that has left the City of Providence is in the midst of an unprecedented fiscal crisis; and

WHEREAS, The State of Rhode Island has amended Brown's charter twice in the last century.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the City Council of the City of Providence does hereby respectfully request that the General Assembly amend the charter of Brown University to eliminate its blanket property tax exemption and to amend any other document pertinent to the granting of this exemption as part of broader legislation such as the 2011 Carnevale Bill.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That upon adoption, copies of this resolution be forwarded to the Governor, Speaker of the House, the President of the Senate, the Majority Leaders of the House and Senate, and all Providence representatives and senators.

IN CITY COUNCIL

JAN 19 2012

READ AND PASSED



PRES.



CLERK

Effective without the
Mayor's Signature:


Anna M. Stetson
City Clerk