

# Constitution of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

## ARTICLE III OF QUALIFICATION FOR OFFICE

**Section 1.** Qualified electors. -- No person shall hold any civil office unless that person be a qualified elector for such office. person's right to vote shall be restored. The general assembly may provide by law for shorter state and local residence requirements to vote for electors for president and vice president of the United States.

**Section 2.** Disqualification upon conviction or plea of nolo contendere -- Requalification following sentence, probation or parole. -- An elector shall be disqualified as a candidate for elective or appointive state or local office or from holding such office if such elector has been convicted of or plead nolo contendere to a felony or if such elector has been convicted or plead nolo contendere to a misdemeanor resulting in a jail sentence of six months or more, either suspended or to be served. Such elector shall not, once so convicted, attain or return to any office until three years after the date of completion of such sentence and of probation or parole.

**Section 3.** Oath of general officers. -- All general officers shall take the following engagement before they act in their respective offices, to wit: You being by the free vote of the electors of this state of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, elected unto the place of do solemnly swear (or, affirm) to be true and faithful unto this state, and to support the Constitution of this state and of the United States; that you will faithfully and impartially discharge all the duties of your aforesaid office to the best of your abilities, according to law: So help you **God**. Or: This affirmation you make and give upon the peril of the penalty of perjury!

**Section 4.** Oath of general assembly members, judges, and other officers. -- The members of the general assembly, the judges of all the courts, and all other officers, both civil and military, shall be bound by oath or affirmation to support this Constitution, and the Constitution of the United States.

**Section 5.** Administration of oaths. -- The oath or affirmation shall be administered to the governor, lieutenant governor, senators, and representatives by the secretary of state, or, in the absence of the secretary of state by the attorney-general. The secretary of state, attorney-general, and general treasurer shall be engaged by the governor, or by a justice of the supreme court.

**Section 6.** Holding of offices under other governments. -- No person holding any office under the government of the United States, or of any state or country, shall act as a general officer or as a member of the general assembly, unless at the time of taking such engagement that person shall have resigned the office under such government; and if any general officer, senator, representative, or judge shall, after election and engagement, accept any appointment under any other government, the office under this shall be immediately vacated; but this restriction shall not apply to any person appointed

to take depositions or acknowledgment of deeds, or other legal instruments, by the authority of any other state or country.

**Section 7.** Ethical conduct. -- The people of the state of Rhode Island believe that public officials and employees must adhere to the highest standards of ethical conduct, respect the public trust and the rights of all persons, be open, accountable and responsive, avoid the appearance of impropriety and not use their position for private gain or advantage. Such persons shall hold their positions during good behavior.

**Section 8.** Ethics commission -- Code of ethics. -- The general assembly shall establish an independent non-partisan ethics commission which shall adopt a code of ethics including, but not limited to, provisions on conflicts of interest, confidential information, use of position, contracts with government agencies and financial disclosure. All elected and appointed officials and employees of state and local government, of boards, commissions and agencies shall be subject to the code of ethics. The ethics commission shall have the authority to investigate violations of the code of ethics and to impose penalties, as provided by law; and the commission shall have the power to remove from office officials who are not subject to impeachment.