

2007 -- H 6139

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2007

H O U S E R E S O L U T I O N

**RECOGNIZING MARCH 8, 2007 AS "WOMEN'S HISTORY DAY" IN THE STATE OF
RHODE ISLAND**

Introduced By: Representatives Giannini, Lima, E Coderre, Walsh, and Williams

Date Introduced: March 08, 2007

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, The State of Rhode Island enthusiastically recognizes the early generation
2 of women pioneers who opened the door for women to run for the General Assembly; and

3 WHEREAS, Isabelle Ahern O'Neill led the way when, in 1922, she became the first
4 woman elected to the Rhode Island Legislature from Smith Hill, just two short years after women
5 gained the right to vote; and

6 WHEREAS, Ms. O'Neill served three terms in the Rhode Island House of
7 Representatives and two terms in the Rhode Island State Senate. She fought to expand pensions
8 for widows and helped to create a Rhode Island Narcotic Board based on legislation she drafted,
9 which was a model for its time; and

10 WHEREAS, Isabelle O'Neill was not a "shrinking violet". She asked for no special
11 favors as a woman. She was quoted as saying, "I will not wear a hat to session nor do I want the
12 men to stop smoking or stop doing anything they normally do... I want to be treated the same...";
13 and

14 WHEREAS, The State of Rhode Island has been honored by the service of other women
15 legislators who led the way in leadership such as: Florence Murray who served in the state
16 legislature from 1948-1956 and went on to be appointed a Supreme Court Justice; Eleanor Slater
17 who served in the House of Representatives from 1959-1966, State Senate from 1967-1968,
18 served as a member of the Democratic Party's National Committee, and was the matriarch of the
19 Rhode Island Democratic Party for many years. Other pioneers include State Representative

1 Anna Hewitt (1933-1934), State Representative Susan Lamb (1937-1940), State Representative
2 Arline Ruth Kiven (1961-1966), and State Senator Gladys Brightman (1945-1962); and

3 WHEREAS, Rhode Island recognizes the accomplishments of other women legislators
4 such as State Senator and State Representative Victoria Lederberg (1975-1982), who was later
5 appointed a Justice on the Rhode Island Supreme Court; Representative Mabel Anderson (1983-
6 2002), who was appointed Deputy Speaker Pro Tempore; Suzanne Henseler (1983-2003), who
7 became the 1st woman Majority Whip of the Rhode Island House of Representatives; State
8 Representative Maria Lopes (1989-2001), the first Black Woman elected to the Rhode Island
9 State Legislature; East Providence State Representative Rose Larisa a champion in the crusade to
10 save the Loeff Carousel (1999); and State Representative Barbara Burlingame (1987-2001) of
11 Woonsocket, a champion of domestic violence issues; and

12 WHEREAS, Today we have twenty-one women serving in the Rhode Island General
13 Assembly and a total of one hundred twenty-two Rhode Island women who have served in this
14 General Assembly past and present; and

15 WHEREAS, This is a day to pay tribute to all Rhode Island women legislators, they are:
16 Aisha Abdullah-Odiase, elected a Representative from Providence on November 3, 1998; Denise
17 C. Aiken, elected a Representative from Warwick on November 5, 1996; Edith H. Ajello, elected
18 a Representative from Providence on November 3, 1992; Rita Anderson, elected a Representative
19 from Providence on November 4, 2003; Mabel M. Anderson, elected a Representative from
20 Pawtucket on November 2, 1982; Lisa Baldelli-Hunt, elected a Representative from Woonsocket
21 on November 6, 2006; Sandy Barone, elected a Representative from Barrington on November 6,
22 1990; Nancy L. Benoit, elected a Representative from Woonsocket on November 6, 1984;
23 Melvoid J. Benson, elected a Representative from North Kingstown on November 6, 1990; Nancy
24 H. Borden, elected a Representative from North Scituate on November 2, 1982; Stella Brien,
25 elected a Representative from Woonsocket on November 6, 2001; Gladys M. Brightman, elected
26 a Representative from Bristol on November 7, 1944; Elaine T. Bucci, elected a Representative
27 from Providence on November 6, 1984; Marguerite J. Bumpus, elected a Representative from
28 Richmond on November 8, 1994; Barbara C. Burlingame, elected a Representative from
29 Woonsocket on November 3, 1987; Christine H. Callahan, elected a Representative from
30 Middletown on November 4, 1986; Bambilyn Breece Cambio, elected a Representative from
31 North Providence on November 3, 1992; Sandra J. Campbell, elected a Representative from
32 Foster on November 6, 1990; Marsha E. Carpenter, elected a Representative from Providence on
33 November 8, 1994; Mary Ann F. Carroll, elected a Representative from Glocester on November
34 5, 1996; Mary Cerra, elected a Representative from Johnston on November 7, 2000; Jennifer A.

1 Champagne, elected a Representative from Johnston on November 3, 1992; Elaine A. Coderre,
2 elected a Representative from Pawtucket on November 6, 1984; Harriet J. D'Attore, elected a
3 Representative from East Greenwich on January 13, 1960; Elizabeth M. Dennigan, elected a
4 Representative from East Providence on November 5, 1996; Susan E. Deveney, elected a
5 Representative from Cranston on November 3, 1992; Grace Diaz, elected a Representative from
6 Providence on November 2, 2004; Helen B. Dinsmore, elected a Representative from Warwick
7 on November 8, 1966; Marion Hartley Donnelly, elected a Representative from Warwick on
8 November 7, 1978; Dorothy B. Edwards, elected a Representative from Portsmouth on November
9 8, 1966; Veronica B. Fagan, elected a Representative from Pascoag on February 10, 1956;
10 Deborah A. Fellela, elected a Representative from Johnston on November 7, 2006; Myrna C.
11 George, elected a Representative from Exeter on November 5, 1996; Joanne M. Giannini, elected
12 a Representative from Providence on November 8, 1994; Ann H. Hanson, elected a
13 Representative from Barrington on November 4, 1980; Theresa M. Healey, elected a
14 Representative from Pawtucket on November 2, 1976; Suzanne M. Henseler, elected a
15 Representative from North Kingstown on November 2, 1982; Nancy C. Hetherington, elected a
16 Representative from Cranston on November 8, 1994; Anna D. Hewitt, elected a Representative
17 from North Providence on November 8, 1932; Susan B. Iannitelli, elected a Representative from
18 Smithfield on November 3, 1992; Loraine L. Kane, elected a Representative from Warwick on
19 November 2, 1978; Leona A. Kelley, elected a Representative from South Kingstown on
20 November 6, 1984; Ellen A. Kellner, elected a Representative from Glocester on November 3,
21 1992; Mary Neidlinger Kilmarx, elected a Representative from Barrington on November 5, 1974;
22 Linda J. Kushner, elected a Representative from Providence on November 2, 1982; Arline R.
23 Kiven, elected a Representative from Providence on November 8, 1960; Alice E. Lafond, elected
24 a Representative from North Smithfield on November 6, 1934; Susan V. Gallagher Lamb, elected
25 a Representative from West Warwick on November 3, 1936; Beatrice A. Lanzi, elected a
26 Representative from Cranston on November 3, 1992; Rose Larisa, elected a Representative from
27 East Providence on November 3, 1998; Victoria Lederberg, elected a Representative from
28 Providence on November 5, 1974; Mary E. Levesque, elected a Representative from Jamestown
29 on November 8, 1988; Charlene Lima, elected a Representative from Providence on November 3,
30 1992; Maria J. Lopes, elected a Representative from East Providence on November 8, 1988;
31 Lucille A. Love, elected a Representative from Little Compton on November 6, 1962; Gertrude
32 Davis Lynch, elected a Representative from Providence on November 4, 1952; Maureen E.
33 Maigret, elected a Representative from Warwick on November 5, 1974; Helena E. McDermott,
34 elected a Representative from Warwick on November 2, 1976; Mary F. McMahan, elected a

1 Representative from Pawtucket on November 4, 1980; Theresa J. Melvin, elected a
2 Representative from Cumberland on November 2, 1982; Helen Migliaccio, elected a
3 Representative from Cranston on November 5, 1974; Elizabeth Morancy, elected a
4 Representative from Providence on November 7, 1978; Carol A. Mumford, elected a
5 Representative from Scituate on November 3, 1998; Eileen S. Naughton, elected a Representative
6 from Warwick on November 2, 1992; Helen I. Nichols, elected a Representative from
7 Woonsocket on November 2, 1982; Barbara Nicholson, elected a Representative from Warwick
8 on November 8, 1966; Isabelle F. Ahearn O'Neill, elected a Representative from Providence on
9 November 7, 1922; Jeanne N. O'Rourke, elected a Representative from Newport on May 3, 1977;
10 Joan B. Quick, elected a Representative from Little Compton on November 6, 1990; Amy G.
11 Rice, elected a Representative from Portsmouth on November 2, 2004; Mary C. Ross, elected a
12 Representative from Providence on November 3, 1992; Emily M. Saucier, elected a
13 Representative from Providence on November 6, 1962; Lulu Mowry Schlesinger, elected a
14 Representative from Charlestown on November 2, 1926; Patricia A. Serpa, elected a
15 Representative from West Warwick on November 7, 2006; Maxine Bradford Shavers, elected a
16 Representative from Newport on November 5, 1996; Katherine Theresa Shunney, elected a
17 Representative from Woonsocket on November 3, 1936; Eleanor F. Slater, elected a
18 Representative from Warwick on November 4, 1958; Clara A. Smith, elected a Representative
19 from Newport on November 3, 1936; Louise E. Stoddard, elected a Representative from
20 Providence on November 6, 1956; Susan A. Story, elected a Representative from Barrington on
21 November 7, 2000; Lucy Rawlings Tootell, elected a Representative from Richmond on
22 November 7, 1972; Mary Lou Walter, elected a Representative from Westerly on November 6,
23 1984; Donna M. Walsh, elected a Representative from Charlestown on November 7, 2006;
24 Anastasia P. Williams, elected a Representative from Providence on November 3, 1992; Norma
25 B. Willis, elected a Representative from Jamestown on November 4, 1980; Marion F. Yatman,
26 elected a Representative from Providence on November 3, 1936; Gladys M. Brightman elected
27 Senator from Bristol on November 6, 1956; Elizabeth M. Cesario elected Senator from North
28 Smithfield on June 21, 1983; Kathleen S. Connell elected Senator from Middletown on June 21,
29 1983; Jennie D. Day elected Senator from Coventry on November 6, 1984; Gloria Kennedy Fleck
30 elected Senator from Warwick on November 2, 1976; Millicent S. Foster elected Senator from
31 North Kingstown on November 30, 1967; Hannah M. Gallo elected Senator from Cranston on
32 November 3, 1998; Jane Brad Gencarelli elected Senator from Westerly on June 21, 1983; June
33 N. Gibbs elected Senator from Middletown on November 6, 1984; Maryellen Goodwin elected
34 Senator from Providence on November 4, 1986; Catherine E. Graziano elected Senator from

1 Providence on November 3, 1992; Ruth Grimes elected Senator from Providence on November 3,
2 1974; Sandra K. Hanaway elected Senator from Cumberland on July 9, 1991; Ann H. Hanson
3 elected Senator from Barrington on June 21, 1983; Victoria Lederberg elected Senator from
4 Providence on November 6, 1984; Beatrice A. Lanzi elected Senator from Cranston on November
5 5, 2002; Edith C. Logee elected Senator from Burrillville on November 8, 1938; Helen M.
6 Mathieu elected Senator from Portsmouth on November 4, 1986; Rita K. Misek elected Senator
7 from Cumberland on June 21, 1983; Florence Kerins Murray elected Senator from Newport on
8 November 2, 1948; Karen J. Nygaard elected Senator from Bristol on November 5, 1996; Isabelle
9 F. Ahearn O'Neill elected Senator from Providence on November 4, 1930; Teresa M. Paiva-
10 Weed elected Senator from Newport on November 3, 1992; Mary A. Parella elected Senator from
11 Bristol on November 3, 1992; Rhoda E. Perry elected Senator from Providence on November 6,
12 1990; Elizabeth H. Roberts elected Senator from Cranston on November 5, 1996; Lila M.
13 Sapinsley elected Senator from Providence on November 7, 1972; Eleanor C. Sasso elected
14 Senator from Providence on November 7, 1978; Marilyn Shannon elected Senator from
15 Pawtucket on November 4, 1980; Eleanor F. Slater elected Senator from Warwick on November
16 8, 1966; Irene P. Smith elected Senator from Burrillville on November 2, 1976; Susan V.
17 Sosnowski elected Senator from South Kingstown on November 5, 1996; Bonnie L. Stewart
18 elected Senator from West Warwick on June 21, 1983; Donna M. Walsh elected Senator from
19 Charlestown on November 5, 1996; Joan R. Wiesner elected Senator from Burrillville on June 21,
20 1983; Myrth York elected Senator from Providence on November 6, 1990; Vilma A. Zanni
21 elected Senator from Johnston on June 21, 1983; now, therefore be it

22 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island and
23 Providence Plantations hereby proclaims March 8th, 2007 to be Rhode Island "Women's History
24 Day" in accordance with the nationally observed celebration. We pay tribute to all of Rhode
25 Island's women legislators, past and present, and salute them for their public service; and be it
26 further

27 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and he hereby is authorized and directed to
28 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to every current female member of the Rhode
29 Island General Assembly.

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