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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2011

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

HONORING LT. PAUL MCALLISTER, OFFICER STEPHEN BLAIS, AND LT. CHRIS SEELENBRANDT FOR THEIR HEROIC EFFORTS IN RESCUING AN EIGHT-YEAR-OLD CHILD FROM DROWNING

Introduced By: Representatives Serpa, Nunes, Morgan, Kennedy, and Reilly

Date Introduced: March 22, 2011

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, Many people go through their lives without any personal contact with a
2 potential life and death situation, without that defining moment that turns an ordinary person into
3 a hero. Lt. Paul McAllister, Officer Stephen Blais, and Lt. Chris Seelenbrandt faced such a
4 challenge, and in that moment of crisis, without hesitation, they did the extraordinary and saved
5 the life and future dreams of a drowning eight-year-old child; and

6 WHEREAS, Fifty feet from shore, a frightened eight-year-old was submerged in the
7 frigid water, clinging precariously to a slippery and frozen edge of a hole after falling through the
8 ice on Remington Pond in West Warwick; and

9 WHEREAS, First on the scene was West Warwick Police Officer Stephen Blais. Seeing
10 the youngster was in imminent peril, Officer Blais immediately attempted a rescue. But with
11 twenty pounds of equipment and no lifeline or survival suit, his heroic efforts had dire
12 consequences. He too became submerged chest-deep in the pond; and

13 WHEREAS, Next on the scene was Lt. Paul McAllister, a twenty-plus-year veteran
14 firefighter with the West Warwick Fire Department. Fortunately, Lt. McAllister had been able to
15 don a survival suit and establish a lifeline as he made his way across the ice from a different
16 direction. Unfortunately, the lifeline he carried proved to be too short and as darkness quickly
17 descended, time was running out; and

18 WHEREAS, Running over the ice towards the child, Lt. McAllister cracked through the
19 ice three times. With dogged determination, he managed to pull himself back up and continue

1 until he was about twenty feet from the victim, where he came to the end of his safety rope; and

2 WHEREAS, Without hesitation, Lt. McAllister unhooked himself and immediately
3 crawled forward on the ice. Reaching the child, he quickly pulled the desperately scared and tired
4 child out of the water onto the ice, telling him to hang onto his neck as he edged his way back to
5 the safety of the shore; and

6 WHEREAS, Coming to the rescue from shore, pulling a 300-foot lifeline was Lt. Chris
7 Seelenbrandt from the West Warwick Fire Department. Lt Seelenbrandt had made his way about
8 thirty feet out onto the ice, quickly retrieved the child from Lt. McAllister, and enabled the
9 soaked and freezing firefighter to make his way safely to shore; and

10 WHEREAS, Through the amazingly heroic efforts of Lt. Paul McAllister, Officer
11 Stephen Blais, and Lt. Chris Seelenbrandt, and through the resilience of youth and the support
12 and skill of numerous additional police and firefighters, an eight-year-old child has a future and
13 has learned some very valuable life lessons; now, therefore be it

14 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island and
15 Providence Plantations hereby recognizes and honors Lt. Paul McAllister, Officer Stephen Blais,
16 and Lt. Chris Seelenbrandt for their heroic and clear-headed actions during the most dire of
17 circumstances. These three men are truly an inspiration to us all and we extend best wishes for
18 their future happiness, success, and good health; and be it further

19 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and he hereby is authorized and directed to
20 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to Lt. Paul McAllister, Officer Stephen Blais, and
21 Lt. Chris Seelenbrandt.

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