

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2017

SENATE RESOLUTION

CELEBRATING MARCH 25, 2017 AS THE 196TH ANNIVERSARY OF GREEK
INDEPENDENCE DAY

Introduced By: Senators Raptakis, Doyle, Paiva Weed, Gallo, and Kettle

Date Introduced: March 30, 2017

Referred To: Recommended for Immediate Consideration

1 WHEREAS, On March 25, 1821, the Feast Day of the Annunciation, the Greek nation
2 reclaimed its ancient heritage as the "Cradle of Democracy" by overthrowing the yoke of
3 oppression which had enslaved its people since the fall of Constantinople in 1453. Conquered by
4 the Ottoman Turks in the 15th century, Greece waged a successful War of Independence (1821-
5 1829) and re-instituted a democratic form of government; and

6 WHEREAS, The people of the United States generously offered humanitarian assistance
7 to the Greek people during their struggle for independence; and

8 WHEREAS, The price for Greece in holding onto our common values in their region was
9 high, as hundreds of thousands of civilians were killed in Greece during World War II; and

10 WHEREAS, Greece is only one of three nations in the world, beyond the former British
11 Empire, that has been allied with the United States in every major international conflict in the last
12 100 years; and

13 WHEREAS, The Government and people of Greece actively participate in peacekeeping
14 and peace-building operations conducted by international organizations, including the United
15 Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the European Union, and the Organization for
16 Security and Co-operation in Europe, and have more recently provided critical support to the
17 operation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas; and

18 WHEREAS, Greece, located in a region where Christianity meets Islam and Judaism,
19 maintains excellent relations with Muslim nations and Israel and demonstrates religious

1 tolerance; and

2 WHEREAS, Greece and the United States are at the forefront of the effort for freedom,
3 democracy, peace, stability, and human rights; and

4 WHEREAS, Those and similar ideas have forged a close bond between Greece and the
5 United States, and their people's will be celebrating the 70th Anniversary of the Truman Doctrine
6 in 2017, passed in 1947 to aid Greece, which was on the brink of collapse after the devastation of
7 the second World War. President Truman's farsighted decision to step in and assist democracies
8 like Greece came with the foresight to know that America's transatlantic partnerships with nations
9 like Greece would become the most enduring and important relationships that we have in the
10 world. The United States eventually gave Greece and other Western European democracies more
11 than two billion dollars in assistance, which in today's money amounts to more than twenty-one
12 billion dollars. The American aid given to Greece through military economic, and diplomatic
13 assistance secured Greece's place in the West and helped countless people; and

14 WHEREAS, A record 1.2 million people requested asylum with the European Union in
15 2015. Greece faced the brunt of this exodus, receiving more than 650,000 migrants in 2015, with
16 asylum seekers arriving at the rate of 8,000 a day. The nation of Greece and its people have
17 generously assisted these applicants and have shown great compassion for them as they seek out a
18 better life for themselves, one filled with personal freedom and economic security. We all owe a
19 debt of gratitude to the Greek people; and

20 WHEREAS, March 25, 2017, Greek Independence Day, marks the 196th anniversary of
21 the beginning of the revolution that freed the Greek people from the Ottoman Empire and
22 celebrates the aspirations for democracy and tolerance that the peoples of Greece and the United
23 States share; and

24 WHEREAS, The Government of Greece has taken important steps in recent years to
25 improve relations with other countries in the region. Greece Foreign Minister Nikos Kotzias, in a
26 recent two-day visit to the United States, highlighted Greece's value as a bastion of stability in a
27 volatile area, the need for security in the region, and outlined the importance of the ties Greece
28 has nurtured with key ally Cyprus and other nations in the region including Israel, Egypt,
29 Lebanon and Jordan; and

30 WHEREAS, It is proper and desirable for the United States to celebrate this anniversary
31 with the Greek people and to reaffirm the democratic principles from which these two great
32 nations were born; now, therefore be it

33 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
34 hereby celebrates March 25, 2017, as the 196th Anniversary of Greek Independence, reaffirms

1 Rhode Island's abiding commitment to the magnificent principles of democracy and religious
2 freedom, and urges Turkey to respect the rights and religious freedoms of the Ecumenical
3 Patriarchate; and be it further

4 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
5 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church of
6 Cranston, the Assumption Greek Orthodox Church of Pawtucket, the St. Spyridon Greek
7 Orthodox Church of Newport, the members of the Rhode Island Congressional Delegation, and
8 Archbishop Demetrios of the Greek Archdiocese of America.

=====
LC002060
=====