

2019 -- H 5018

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2019

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

**EXPRESSING CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF JOSEFINA "DOÑA FEFA"
ROSARIO**

Introduced By: Representatives Diaz, Slater, Williams, Mendez, and Maldonado

Date Introduced: January 03, 2019

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, Josefina "Doña Fefa" Rosario, a beloved figure within the Rhode Island
2 Latino community, passed away after a long illness at Our Lady of Fatima Hospital; and

3 WHEREAS, Josefina Rosario was born in 1928 in the Dominican Republic and grew up
4 between the town of Villa Elisa and Santo Domingo, the nation's capital. In 1949 she immigrated
5 to the United States and lived in New York City with her sister, Minerva. After meeting the love
6 of her life, her husband Tony, they moved to New Haven before later finding work in Providence
7 in 1959; and

8 WHEREAS, Mrs. Rosario went on to establish a legacy in Providence as one of the most
9 pre-eminent members of the Hispanic community. She was the founder of the first Latino store in
10 Rhode Island, Fefa's Market on Broad Street, and many consider it to have been the beginning of
11 Hispanic commerce in Rhode Island. Her inspiration for opening her store was her desire to sell
12 foods familiar to Latinos, foods she grew up with as a child. She would travel to New York City
13 every two weeks to restock her store, and while there she would talk up Providence to the people
14 she met and, as a result, some went back with her to Providence and stayed. Additionally, her
15 business was also a community center and this was by design as Mrs. Rosario desired a place
16 where people in the community could come together in one room; and

17 WHEREAS, In addition to the store, Mrs. Rosario and her husband owned a three-story
18 house on Chester Street where they would provide housing at low rates to newcomers until they
19 could find new housing. She also helped many new arrivals in their quest to find work. In honor

1 of her legacy, the Providence Children's Museum in 2006 memorialized her store as part of its
2 "Coming to Rhode Island" exhibit; and

3 WHEREAS, Josefina Rosario was predeceased by her husband, Tony Rosario. She leaves
4 behind her three children, Cecilia Santana, Miriam Reyes, and Madelaine Rosario, and several
5 grandchildren; now, therefore be it

6 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island and
7 Providence Plantations hereby expresses its condolences on the passing of Josephine "Doña Fefa"
8 Rosario; and be it further

9 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
10 transmit duly certifies copies of this resolution to Cecilia Santana, Miriam Reyes and Madelaine
11 Rosario.

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