

2021 -- H 5945

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

HOUSE RESOLUTION

PROCLAIMS MARCH 2, 2021 AS A "DAY OF EMPATHY" IN THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

Introduced By: Representatives Felix, Batista, Kazarian, Casimiro, Edwards, Potter, Alzate, S Lima, Morales, and Giraldo

Date Introduced: February 25, 2021

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, The Day of Empathy is a national day of action organized in various states
2 "to generate empathy, humanize, and uplift the stories of those who have been impacted by the
3 criminal justice system"; and

4 WHEREAS, The vast majority of the more than 1,800 people currently serving sentences
5 in Rhode Island's prisons and jails will transition into communities throughout the state; and

6 WHEREAS, These formerly incarcerated individuals will become part of a population of
7 more than 70,000 Rhode Islanders who have a past felony record; and

8 WHEREAS, Helping people with criminal records become productive members of
9 society benefits their families and communities in many ways, including improving safety and
10 preventing and reducing crime; and

11 WHEREAS, Formerly incarcerated individuals face numerous challenges that include
12 finding work, housing, health care, and transportation, and these challenges may lead to
13 recidivism, health, social, and security concerns; and

14 WHEREAS, Federal, state, and local leaders have worked to establish a policy that
15 supports individuals who return to their communities after serving time in prison, jail, or under
16 custodial supervision; and

17 WHEREAS, Dream Corps JUSTICE has developed plans and policies to facilitate a
18 better transition for people from incarceration or community supervision back into society by
19 coordinating existing resources, identifying resource gaps, and advocating on behalf of

1 individuals with criminal records; and

2 WHEREAS, The National Day of Empathy includes representation from government,
3 education, faith- and community-based organizations, and those formerly incarcerated, and is
4 studying the needs of individuals who have been released from correctional institutions and
5 working to increase the effectiveness of local reentry councils and smart criminal justice policies
6 and/or practices; and

7 WHEREAS, The National Day of Empathy serves to connect justice-involved individuals
8 with resources and services important to successful reentry, and decrease stigma by raising public
9 awareness of the issues and challenges faced by formerly incarcerated individuals as they reenter
10 the community; now, therefore be it

11 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island hereby
12 proclaims March 2, 2021, as a “Day of Empathy” and urges its observance to all citizens; and be
13 it further

14 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
15 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Nick Horton and Patrick Westfall, Co-
16 Executive Directors of OpenDoors.

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