WHEREAS, June 10th marks the anniversary of the death, in 1580, of the revered Portuguese poet, Luis Vaz Camoes, who is best known for his epic poem "Os Lusiadas," a tribute to the golden age of Portuguese maritime exploration and discoveries. The day is now celebrated around the world in Portuguese-speaking communities as the "Day of Portugal, Camoes and the Portuguese Communities"; and

WHEREAS, Rhode Island's large and significant Portuguese population has made substantial contributions to all aspects of the State's history and rich cultural diversity; and

WHEREAS, Between 1830 and 1860, whaling ships from Bristol, Newport, New Bedford, and Fall River traveled to the Azores where they often took on Portuguese sailors. Many of these sailors traveled back to New England, settling in Providence, Pawtucket, and East Providence. They frequently took on work in the textile mills, which were abundant in the area at the time, while others became farmers in Little Compton and Portsmouth; and

WHEREAS, The main goal for the Portuguese people coming to Rhode Island and the United States was economic betterment, but, like the Irish and Italians, the Portuguese people all too often suffered discrimination and exploitation in employment. Through perseverance and an indomitable work ethic, they carved a future for themselves, their families, and generations to come; and

WHEREAS, Thousands sought refuge in Rhode Island in the mid-20th century to escape the devastation of the Capelinhos volcano on the Azorean island of Faial, opening the door for
WHEREAS, The number of Rhode Islanders who claim Portuguese ancestry is nearly 10% of the state's population, the largest percentage of any state in the nation with the majority making their homes in the Providence, Kent and Bristol Counties; and

WHEREAS, The 1st Congressional District of Rhode Island claims the highest Portuguese population of any Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives; and

WHEREAS, The Portuguese American population in Rhode Island is an active and vital part of our State. They have enriched and delighted our palates with fine restaurants that serve traditional Portuguese dishes, and they actively contribute to and participate in all areas of the community distinguishing themselves in leadership roles in such fields as the judiciary, law enforcement, medicine, education, social services, entrepreneurship, civic engagement and political participation; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island hereby thanks Rhode Island's Portuguese community for the many contributions they have generously made to the enrichment of this State; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this Senate hereby recognizes June 10, 2021, as the "Day of Portugal" in the State of Rhode Island and joins in the celebration of the 44th consecutive celebration of this auspicious occasion; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Rhode Island "Day of Portugal" Committee, and the Vice-Consulate of Portugal in Providence.