

2015 -- H 5745

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2015

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

STRONGLY CONDEMNING HATE CRIMES AND RELIGIOUS BIGOTRY

Introduced By: Representatives Ackerman, Regunberg, Amore, Shekarchi, and
McNamara

Date Introduced: February 26, 2015

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, Rhode Island was founded on the premise and promise of religious freedom.
2 Rhode Island's founding father Roger Williams was a passionate believer in 'Soul Liberty' and
3 famously stated that "no person within the said colony, at any time hereafter, shall be anywise
4 molested, punished, disquieted, or called in question for any real differences in opinion in matters
5 of religion but that all persons may enjoy their own judgments and consciences in matters of
6 religious concernments." These wise words are part of the very foundation of a civil society. Over
7 the years, many good men and women have perished in order to protect these precious freedoms
8 and liberties, both at home and abroad; and

9 WHEREAS, In recent years, there has been an increase in religious based hate crimes
10 aimed at Jews, Muslims, Christians, and people of other faiths. We witnessed the murders of
11 cartoonists in Paris, France, which were vicious examples of anti-Semitic hatred being
12 perpetrated against French Jews, and culminated in the death of seventeen innocent people. In the
13 United States, three Muslim students attending the University of North Carolina were recently
14 murdered; and

15 WHEREAS, It is time for all Rhode Islanders to honor the principles promulgated by
16 Roger Williams that helped to form our great state by speaking out loudly and condemning recent
17 hate crimes including Swastikas and portraits of Hitler painted at a bus stop in Providence, hateful
18 graffiti painted at the Islamic School of Rhode Island, and all other forms of "hatred" found in
19 public venues; and

20 WHEREAS, The freedom to worship the religion of one's choice, or to choose not to be a

1 religious believer, is a basic human right that should be available to everyone. An attack on any
2 one person or group based on religious belief is an attack on every single one of us. Turning a
3 blind eye and doing nothing about these acts of hate emboldens those who would use violence
4 and intimidation tactics to deny people this basic human right. Our founding fathers understood
5 just how important this principle is and stated this in the first article of the Bill of Rights; and

6 WHEREAS, Leaders across the globe have united in opposition to the recent increase in
7 hate crimes based on religious belief. The President of the United States, the Pope, and the
8 leaders of countries from Egypt and Jordan to France, Germany, Italy, Canada and Great Britain
9 have strongly denounced the recent spate of hate crime violence. Hate crimes have no place in a
10 civilized society. It is time for freedom loving people across the globe to unite and speak out
11 against these crimes; now, therefore be it

12 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island and
13 Providence Plantations hereby strongly condemns all hate crimes and all forms of religious
14 bigotry. We stand in strong support of the great principles and the vital human rights, including
15 freedom of religion, which unite all Rhode Islanders; and be it further

16 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
17 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the President of the United States, Barack
18 Obama, the Rhode Island Congressional delegation, the Governor of the State of Rhode Island,
19 Gina Raimondo, the Principal of the Islamic School of Rhode Island, Assalamu Alaikum wa
20 Rahmatu Allah wa Barakatuh, and the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island.

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