

2016 -- H 8259

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2016

HOUSE RESOLUTION

HONORING RHONDA O'DONNELL ON BEING THE FIRST MEDICAL MARIJUANA
PATIENT IN THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

Introduced By: Representatives Slater, Edwards, Diaz, McNamara, and Marcello

Date Introduced: May 26, 2016

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, Rhonda O'Donnell, a longtime resident of Warwick who currently resides
2 in Coventry, is recognized as a champion of medical marijuana patients both in Rhode Island and
3 nationally, for her stalwart, compassionate advocacy for those seeking relief from debilitating
4 medical conditions; and

5 WHEREAS, Despite being diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis at a young age, Mrs.
6 O'Donnell has led a vibrant and productive life as a registered nurse, patient advocate, wife of the
7 late Jack O'Donnell of Warwick, and mother of two children; and

8 WHEREAS, Mrs. O'Donnell is most widely recognized for her public advocacy for
9 passage of Rhode Island's medical marijuana law in 2006, testifying over multiple years in favor
10 of legislation, recruiting patients to join the legislative push, and serving as a role model for those
11 who were too fearful to stand up in public for the right to use medical marijuana; and

12 WHEREAS, During Mrs. O'Donnell's push for Rhode Island's medical marijuana law,
13 she revealed deeply personal information about her family's efforts to assist her own father in
14 finding relief from the effects of chemotherapy through medical marijuana, long before there was
15 any protection under state law; and

16 WHEREAS, Mrs. O'Donnell accompanied the late State Representative Thomas C.
17 Slater in hand-delivering her application to the Department of Health as the first licensed medical
18 marijuana patient in Rhode Island in 2006, an event that gave hope and comfort to those facing
19 similar health challenges; and

1 WHEREAS, Mrs. O'Donnell's advocacy on behalf of Rhode Islanders also included
2 raising funds for the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Rhode Island through "MS Walks" with her
3 team, Rhonda's Roadrunners; and

4 WHEREAS, Mrs. O'Donnell was recognized as the Marijuana Policy Project's National
5 Activist of the Year; and

6 WHEREAS, One of Mrs. O'Donnell's lasting legacies is the inspiration she provided her
7 son Tom to go on to be a nationally recognized advocate helping people in states throughout the
8 country advance medical marijuana legislation; and

9 WHEREAS, Mrs. O'Donnell has long remained a true advocate that has never sought
10 public acclaim or recognition for her work, but rather is content in the knowledge that her
11 magnanimous efforts have led to the improvement in the quality of life for countless Rhode
12 Islanders; now, therefore be it

13 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island and
14 Providence Plantations hereby recognizes and honors Rhonda O'Donnell on being the very first
15 medical marijuana patient in the state, and a woman who remains a true role model and
16 inspiration for those dealing with pain and suffering; and be it further

17 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
18 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Mrs. Rhonda O'Donnell.

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