

2020 -- S 2149

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2020

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

RECOGNIZING THE CELEBRATION OF THE CHINESE NEW YEAR "THE YEAR OF THE RAT"

Introduced By: Senators Cano, Crowley, Nesselbush, Ruggerio, and Paolino

Date Introduced: January 28, 2020

Referred To: Recommended for Immediate Consideration

1 WHEREAS, The most important and popular of festivals, the date of the Chinese New
2 Year celebration, which is also known as the Lunar New Year, is fixed traditionally according to
3 the lunar calendar as the second new moon after the winter solstice. This year the celebration falls
4 on January 25, 2020; and

5 WHEREAS, No one is certain how far back the New Year celebrations go in history.
6 Their religious background involves clearing away the bad luck of the old year and beginning
7 anew. It was also believed that the various god-like spirits had to report on the past year to the
8 ruler of heaven, the Jade Emperor. Many still open the celebrations by burning a paper image of
9 Tsao Wang, the hearth god, thus sending him on his way one week before the new year; and

10 WHEREAS, Usually on the day before New Year's Eve, men pay ceremonial visits to
11 friends and associates, wishing them luck with the traditional greeting kung-hsi fa-ts'ai, meaning
12 "Happy greetings and may you gather wealth." On the last day of the year, final preparations are
13 made for the family's New Year's Eve feast, the highlight of the celebration. Before the meal, all
14 doors are sealed with strips of paper to prevent the entrance of evil, and no one may enter or leave
15 until these are removed shortly before dawn. After the meal, gifts are exchanged and, at midnight,
16 solemn greetings and family ceremonies take place; and

17 WHEREAS, Traditionally, the festivities last 15 days until the Lantern Festival, a time
18 for parades of elaborate paper lanterns and street dances by dragons or lions. New Year is also a
19 time for giving alms to the poor and for eating special lucky foods; and

1 WHEREAS, Each lunar year is popularly known by one of the 12 animals of the Chinese
2 Zodiac. These names provide a ready reference because each is used only once in 12 years. This
3 year will be celebrated as "The Year of the Rat"; now, therefore, be it

4 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
5 hereby recognizes the celebration of the Chinese New Year--"The Year of the Rat." This Senate
6 also wishes to extend its deepest respect and appreciation to the Rhode Island Asian community
7 for all that it has contributed to the rich diversity of Rhode Island culture. The closeness of the
8 traditional Asian family, its dynamic work ethic, and its innumerable endowments to literature
9 and the performing arts inspire us all; and be it further

10 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
11 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to the Rhode Island Association of Chinese
12 Americans.

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