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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

SENATE RESOLUTION

EXPRESSING DEEPEST CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF THE HONORABLE
DENNIS J. ROBERTS, II

Introduced By: Senators Ruggerio, Coyne, and F Lombardi

Date Introduced: January 04, 2022

Referred To: Recommended for Immediate Consideration

1 WHEREAS, It is with deepest sadness that this Senate has learned of the passing of
2 former Rhode Island Attorney General Dennis J. Roberts, II, the beloved husband of Sherry
3 Roberts; and

4 WHEREAS, Mr. Roberts was born in Providence in 1941, the son of Thomas and
5 Florence Roberts. He came from a family devoted to public service, the law, and good
6 government. His father was a distinguished jurist who served on the Rhode Island Superior Court
7 and was later appointed the Chief Justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court from 1966 to 1976.
8 His mother was a teacher at the Henry Barnard School and his uncle, Dennis J. Roberts was
9 Mayor of Providence from 1941 to 1951, and Governor of Rhode Island from 1951 to 1959; and

10 WHEREAS, Mr. Roberts graduated from Fordham University in 1963, and attained a law
11 degree from the Boston College Law School in 1966. Upon graduating from law school, he
12 embarked on a career that made a significant mark on the legal, political and public service
13 landscapes of Rhode Island. He served with distinction and integrity as the Attorney General of
14 Rhode Island from 1979 to 1985, and for more than fifty years as a lawyer in private practice; and

15 WHEREAS, As a practicing attorney, Mr. Roberts was a member of the Rhode Island
16 and New York Bars, the United States Court of Appeals and the United States District Court. He
17 had a diverse practice and represented numerous famous clients including the National Football
18 League, Proctor & Gamble, and Microsoft. He was also proud to represent many average Rhode
19 Islanders and worked tirelessly to ensure that their rights were protected in the courthouse; and

1 WHEREAS, Mr. Roberts was a firm believer in the need and rights of everyone to have
2 access to quality healthcare. He played a vital and instrumental role in the establishment of the
3 Rhode Island Group Health Association, the State’s first and largest HMO. In his practice, he
4 represented the Rhode Island State Nurses Association and the Rhode Island Association of
5 Nurse Anesthetists; and

6 WHEREAS, Mr. Roberts was also an advocate of consumer rights. He served for twelve
7 years as the attorney for the Rhode Island Consumers Council, and appeared frequently before the
8 Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission to oppose or moderate intended rate increases for
9 electricity and natural gas suppliers; and

10 WHEREAS, Thanks to Mr. Roberts support and strong belief in gender equality,
11 numerous women served in high positions within his administration as Attorney General, many of
12 whom went on to have distinguished careers within the Rhode Island Judiciary. In recognition of
13 his support for women’s equality, Mr. Roberts received the 2018 Florence K. Murray Award
14 from the Rhode Island Bar Association; and

15 WHEREAS, In addition to his wife Sherry, Mr. Roberts leaves behind his daughter, Jane
16 Roberts, his grandchildren, Liam, Shannon and Cian, and his brother, Tom Roberts. He was
17 predeceased by his son, Thomas H. Roberts II; now, therefore be it

18 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island hereby expresses its deepest
19 condolences to the Roberts Family on the passing of the Honorable Dennis J. Roberts, II and
20 honors his legacy of devoted and distinguished service to our State; and be it further

21 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
22 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Mrs. Sherry Roberts.

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