

2022 -- H 7107

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2022

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

EXPRESSING DEEPEST CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF BENJAMIN W. LITTLE,  
SR.

Introduced By: Representatives Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Hull, Alzate, Batista, Ajello, C  
Lima, Slater, Edwards, and Costantino

Date Introduced: January 18, 2022

Referred To: House read and passed

1           WHEREAS, It is with deepest sympathy that this House has learned of the passing of  
2 Benjamin W. Little, Sr., the husband of Juliana Crane, the beloved patriarch of our friend and  
3 colleague, State Representative Anastasia P. Little Williams, Rego Cano, Joshua Little, Benjamin  
4 Little Jr., Jay Alexander Little, and their families, and the Godfather of Quintin Barros Prout and  
5 Asia Darakjian; and

6           WHEREAS, Born in the City of Newport, Mr. Little was a son of the late Ferdinand  
7 Douglass Little and Beatrice Delegal Little, and the brother of Doris Little, Paul Cardoza, and the  
8 late Eva Douglass Robinson, George Gray, and John Cardoza. He was a graduate of Rogers High  
9 School, and served our country with honor in both the United States Army and Marine Corps.  
10 Upon returning from the service, he earned his Bachelor of Science in Business Administration  
11 from Roger Williams University, and a Master's degree in Education Management from  
12 Cambridge College; and

13           WHEREAS, Mr. Little began his career quest for equal opportunity as the Associate  
14 Director for the Progress Association for Economic Development. In 1973, he was selected to  
15 head the Providence Human Relations Commission (PHRC), and under his leadership, the  
16 Commission greatly advanced opportunities for minorities, and protection for the City's minority  
17 youths and adult workers from discrimination; and

18           WHEREAS, In addition, Mr. Little chaired the City's Affirmative Action Task Force and  
19 was appointed to the Governor's Justice Commission of Standards and Goals Project, where he

1 initiated the introduction of a city ordinance that for the first time, included the issue of  
2 discrimination based on sexual orientation. He was subsequently selected by the United States  
3 Department of Justice’s Community Relations Division to conduct a fact-finding mission in  
4 Washington and Texas on “Deadly Use of Force.” He also founded the New England Association  
5 of Human Rights Directors and sponsored an exhibit in conjunction with the Oakland Museum  
6 entitled “Black Pioneers and Contemporaries in Science and Technology”; and

7 WHEREAS, Mr. Little next joined the United States Department of Housing and Urban  
8 Development (HUD) Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) Division where he received  
9 numerous commendations for his work monitoring fair housing and equal opportunity patterns in  
10 southern New England municipalities, and was later selected to head the monitoring and  
11 assessment of the City of Boston; and

12 WHEREAS, In 1991, Mr. Little was named Deputy Director for the Town of Greenwich  
13 Housing Authority, and was later promoted to Executive Director and CEO. In June of 2001, the  
14 Greenwich magazine published “Another Side of Greenwich”, an article that followed his career  
15 with the Housing Authority and his mission to instill pride, self-reliance, education, and a sense  
16 of responsibility to their community; and

17 WHEREAS, Mr. Little had also coordinated with numerous community organizations  
18 and launched Head Start programs in three housing complexes, as well as a panoply of programs  
19 and funding for on-site childcare, educational programs such as “Resident Independence through  
20 Employment” that assisted more than 350 Housing Authority residents to find jobs, and a three-  
21 month educational program on home ownership that culminated in the Housing Authority's  
22 purchase of six condominiums for residents who completed the program and were approved for a  
23 mortgage to buy; and

24 WHEREAS, Ben Little's lifetime of achievements was summed up in a statement from  
25 one community program director who had worked with numerous housing authorities and stated  
26 the he knew "of no executive director who has greater initiatives in affording a quality of life and  
27 creating opportunity for public housing residents than Ben Little.” In 2003, Mr. Little retired; and

28 WHEREAS, Never one to remain idle, after retiring Mr. Little took classes and began  
29 producing stunning watercolor paintings, and later had his work showcased at an art gallery for a  
30 Veteran’s exhibit and placed third in a Pennsylvania art fair; and

31 WHEREAS, There is no doubt that Ben Little, a staunch equal opportunity advocate and  
32 gentleman, helped to better the lives of many people with his life’s endeavors, and he will be  
33 greatly missed; now, therefore be it

34 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island hereby

1 expresses deepest sympathies on the passing of Benjamin W. Little, Sr.; and be it further

2 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to

3 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to Juliana Crane, the Honorable Anastasia

4 Williams, Rego Cano, Joshua Little, Benjamin Little Jr., and Jay Alexander Little.

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