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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2014

SENATE RESOLUTION

**EXPRESSING ITS DEEPEST CONDOLENCES TO THE FARMER FAMILY ON THE
PASSING OF THE HONORABLE SUSAN L. FARMER, FORMER RHODE ISLAND
SECRETARY OF STATE AND THE FIRST WOMAN IN RHODE ISLAND HISTORY TO
HOLD STATEWIDE GENERAL OFFICE**

Introduced By: Senators Paiva Weed, Ruggerio, Goldin, and Algieri

Date Introduced: January 08, 2014

Referred To: Recommended for Immediate Consideration

1 WHEREAS, Susan Farmer, who broke the glass ceiling in Rhode Island politics to get
2 elected Secretary of State and become the first woman in Rhode Island history to hold statewide
3 general office, passed away after fighting a long battle against cancer; and

4 WHEREAS, Susan Farmer was born in Boston, a daughter of the late Ralph and
5 Margaret (Tyng) Lawson. Her father was the retired president of a machine tool plant and her
6 mother was prominent in Republican women's circles. Ms. Farmer lived for a while in Bristol,
7 Rhode Island and was a Providence resident for more than 60 years. She went to Wheeler School
8 in Providence, then Stoneleigh-Burnham School in Greenfield, Massachusetts, now known as
9 Simmons College; and

10 WHEREAS, Susan Farmer began her involvement in politics in 1971 due to her
11 opposition to, and increasing frustration with the Vietnam War. She and her husband helped start
12 a "Dump-Nixon" rally that drew thousands to the State House. In 1972 she ran the Rhode Island
13 Presidential campaign for California Republican Paul McCloskey, an ardent opponent of the
14 Vietnam War who was trying to deny President Nixon the 1972 Republican Presidential
15 nomination; and

16 WHEREAS, In 1976 she became then Senator John Chafee's Finance Director and later
17 in 1979 she ran for, and won, a seat on the commission drafting a new Home Rule Charter for
18 Providence; and

1 WHEREAS, After losing her bid in 1980 to become Rhode Island Secretary of State, she
2 ran again in 1982 and emerged victorious. She easily won re-election in 1984 but lost a hard-
3 fought campaign in 1986 for Lieutenant Governor; and

4 WHEREAS, A year later in 1987 Susan Farmer was offered the job of General Manager
5 of Channel 36, Rhode Island's public television station. Susan re-invigorated public television in
6 Rhode Island, using her administrative, fundraising and public-relations skills. She came up with
7 the idea of airing a weekly public-affairs show, "A Lively Experiment", and became a prolific
8 fundraiser for the station. She ran Public Television Station WSBE from 1987 to 2004, and
9 served as President of the Rhode Island PBS Foundation from 1987 to 2005. She was inducted
10 into the Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame in 2010; and

11 WHEREAS, Besides her husband Malcolm Farmer III, Susan Farmer leaves daughters,
12 Heidi Farmer Piccerelli of Barrington, and Stephanie Lawson of Kentfield, California; now,
13 therefore be it

14 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
15 hereby expresses its deepest condolences to the Farmer family on the passing of the Honorable
16 Susan L. Farmer; 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 Mr. Malcolm Farmer III.

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