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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2014

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SENATE RESOLUTION

EXPRESSING ITS DEEPEST CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF THE HONORABLE  
ROBERT F. ARRIGAN, FORMER CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE RHODE ISLAND WORKERS'  
COMPENSATION COURT

Introduced By: Senators Ruggerio, Goodwin, McCaffrey, Lombardi, and Jabour

Date Introduced: January 15, 2014

Referred To: Recommended for Immediate Consideration

1           WHEREAS, The Honorable Robert Arrigan, former Chief Justice of the Rhode Island  
2 Workers' Compensation Court, passed away on December 26, 2013, at his home in Juno Beach,  
3 Florida. He was the beloved husband of Joan C. (Selwyn) Arrigan for 51 years; and

4           WHEREAS, Judge Robert F. Arrigan was born in Providence, Rhode Island, the son of  
5 the late Leo E. and Antoinette M. (O'Connell) Arrigan, Sr. and was the beloved father of the late  
6 Robert Paul Arrigan, loving brother of Frederick J. Arrigan, and his late wife Frances of  
7 Warwick, and the late Leo E. Arrigan, Jr.; and

8           WHEREAS, Robert was a graduate of LaSalle Academy and Providence College, and  
9 attended the United States Naval Academy, the United States Army Air Defense School, and  
10 served as a Captain with the United States Army Reserve. He received his J.D. from Georgetown  
11 University Law School and was admitted to the Rhode Island Bar in 1961; and

12           WHEREAS, Robert Arrigan served as a Providence Municipal Court Judge from 1975 to  
13 1978. He was appointed Commissioner of the Workers' Compensation Commission by Governor  
14 J. Joseph Garrahy in 1978, and was appointed Vice-President of the Commission in 1984. Judge  
15 Arrigan spearheaded the effort to transform the Commission to a court and was appointed its first  
16 Chief Judge by Governor Bruce Sundlun in 1991, serving in that position until his retirement in  
17 2002; and

18           WHEREAS, During the course of his service as Chief, Judge Arrigan worked tirelessly to  
19 transform a dysfunctional workers' compensation system into an international model of

1 efficiency. He worked closely with now Senator Whitehouse, the General Assembly and  
2 Governor Sundlun to overhaul the entire workers' compensation system in Rhode Island to  
3 include changes in the law, court procedures and the administration of justice. He then worked  
4 tirelessly to implement these changes helping to make the system what it is today. Part of these  
5 reforms included the creation and oversight of the Workers' Compensation Advisory Council and  
6 the Workers' Compensation Medical Advisory Board; and

7 WHEREAS, Chief Judge Arrigan's dedication to the rule of law went beyond the  
8 boundaries of his position as Chief Judge of the Rhode Island Workers' Compensation Court. He  
9 taught a course in Workers' Compensation at Roger Williams University that is the foundation of  
10 workers' compensation professionals in Rhode Island that continues to this day. He also had been  
11 active in the International Association of Industrial Accident Boards and Commissions, serving in  
12 many leadership roles until eventually becoming its President. He was also a trustee of the  
13 International Workers' Compensation College; and

14 WHEREAS, Judge Arrigan also devoted much of his time to charitable endeavors. He  
15 and his wife, Joan, co-chaired the Rhode Island Chapter of the Sovereign Order of the Knights  
16 and Dames of Malta. Robert was a member of the Sons of Irish Kings, Friendly Sons of St.  
17 Patrick, the University Club, Jonathan's Landing Golf Club, and was a member of the  
18 Georgetown University Alumni. He was also inducted into the LaSalle Academy Hall of Fame.  
19 He leaves behind his wife, Joan Arrigan; now, therefore be it

20 RESOLVED, That this Senate of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations hereby  
21 expresses its deepest condolences on the passing of Chief Judge Robert F. Arrigan; and be it  
22 further

23 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to  
24 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Joan Arrigan.

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