

2023 -- H 6280

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2023

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

**EXPRESSING DEEPEST CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF THE HONORABLE
MARYELLEN GOODWIN**

Introduced By: Representatives Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Slater, Place, Ackerman,
Kennedy, Diaz, Ajello, McNamara, and J. Lombardi

Date Introduced: April 18, 2023

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, It is with sincere sadness and regret that this House has learned of the
2 passing of the Honorable Maryellen Goodwin, the Rhode Island Senate Majority Whip, and our
3 venerated colleague and friend; and

4 WHEREAS, Maryellen Goodwin grew up with her two sisters, Sheila and Maureen, in
5 the Smith Hill neighborhood of the City of Providence. She was the daughter of the late Patricia
6 and the former Senator Thomas Goodwin; and

7 WHEREAS, In addition to her sisters, Senator Goodwin is survived by her companion,
8 former Lieutenant Governor Charles Fogarty, brothers-in-law Paul Connelly and Jeffrey
9 LaRocque, her beloved nieces and nephews, Marygrace Heywood, Teresa Rose, John Paul
10 LaRocque and Liam Thomas Connelly, her aunts Ellen Myers, Catherine Murphy, and Elizabeth
11 Hynes, her dear friend Kristen Silvia, and countless family, friends, and loved ones; and

12 WHEREAS, Upon graduation from St. Patrick High School, Senator Goodwin attained
13 her Bachelor's degree from Rhode Island College. She had been employed by the City of
14 Providence in the Planning & Development Department for the past 16 years; and

15 WHEREAS, Beginning in 1984, Senator Goodwin served as a member and later as Chair
16 of the Providence Democratic City Committee. One year later, while in her early 20s, she was
17 elected to the 1986 Rhode Island Constitutional Convention, and in November of 1986, following
18 in her father's footsteps, she ran and was elected to what is now Rhode Island's 1st Senatorial
19 District, a position she would hold for eighteen terms, until her passing; and

1 WHEREAS, Earning the respect and trust of her Senators, the Honorable Maryellen
2 Goodwin was named Senate Majority Whip in 2011. She had also served as the Chair of the
3 Senate Committee on Special Legislation and the Chair of the Joint Committee on the State
4 Lottery; and

5 WHEREAS, Senator Goodwin's tenure in the Senate earned her the distinction of being
6 the second-longest-serving member of the chamber and the ability and drive to champion myriad
7 significant and worthwhile changes in our State and in the lives of its citizenry. She championed
8 laws improving lead poisoning prevention, the child care industry, domestic violence prevention,
9 public safety, worker protections, access to health care, and home care and nursing home safety;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, Senator Goodwin is credited with being "the driving force" in the Senate for
12 Rhode Island's Paid Sick Leave law, independent options for senior home care, stronger reporting
13 requirements for abuse in schools, the 2021 minimum staffing law for nursing homes, the State's
14 Red Flag law to remove firearms from individuals who pose a clear threat to themselves or
15 others, as well as the Homicide Prevention Act, and legislation requiring individuals convicted of
16 felony domestic assault to surrender their firearms; and

17 WHEREAS, Perhaps one of the most personal accomplishments was the passage of the
18 "Maryellen Goodwin Colorectal Cancer Screening Act" requiring insurers to fully cover
19 preventive screenings and colonoscopies, and which she had initially introduced before her own
20 diagnosis, but upon final passage, was named in her honor; and

21 WHEREAS, Senator Goodwin was also always active within her community in addition
22 to her work at the State House. She was a faithful and life-long communicant of St. Patrick
23 Church, a member of the Water Resources Board, the Internship Commission, the Permanent
24 Advisory Commission on Women, the R.I. Veterans Home Commission, on the Board of
25 Directors for the Smith Hill Center, the Providence 12th Ward Democratic Committee and a
26 member of the Smith Hill Drug and Alcohol Abuse Commission; and

27 WHEREAS, For a lifetime dedicated to the people of Rhode Island, Senator Goodwin
28 has been honored and recognized by numerous organizations including, the AARP's national
29 Capital Caregivers Award, MADD, the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the
30 American Cancer Society, the Rhode Island National Guard and the Cesar Chavez Committee of
31 Rhode Island; and

32 WHEREAS, The Honorable Maryellen Goodwin's wit was legendary, her smile
33 infectious, her intellect was intimidating, her accomplishments were vast, and her love and
34 compassion were limitless. She was a woman who tore down barriers for all women and

1 fearlessly fought for what was right and just, and for those among us who were most in need of a
2 voice; now, therefore be it

3 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island hereby
4 extends deepest condolences on the passing of the Honorable Maryellen Goodwin; and be it
5 further

6 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
7 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to Sheila Connelly and Family, Maureen
8 LaRocque and Family, and Kristen Silvia.

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