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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

HOUSE RESOLUTION

CONGRATULATING THE PONAGANSET GIRLS BASKETBALL TEAM ON WINNING
THE 2024-25 RHODE ISLAND INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUE GIRLS BASKETBALL
STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

Introduced By: Representatives Chippendale, Place, Santucci, Blazejewski, Kennedy,
Ajello, Tanzi, Boylan, McNamara, and Shallcross Smith

Date Introduced: April 03, 2025

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, The story of the 2024-2025 Ponaganset Girls Basketball Team was one of
2 perseverance and overcoming challenges to excel on the court and emerge as the State champions
3 for the second time in four years. The Chieftains were a young squad entering seasonal play and
4 became even younger when two seniors were injured. Yet, despite these challenges, they finished
5 the season with an outstanding 18-2 regular season record and earned the number 2 seed in the
6 Rhode Island State Tournament, thanks in large part to the outstanding leadership and steady
7 hand provided by Head Coach Gary Martinelli; and

8 WHEREAS, In the first round, Ponaganset easily dispatched the Lincoln School by a
9 score of 65-37, defeated LaSalle Academy in a hard fought second round game by a score of 40-
10 36, and defeated Portsmouth in the semi-finals 44-31 to earn a berth in the finals against their
11 arch-rivals, Moses Brown; and

12 WHEREAS, In a thrilling championship game, a young Ponaganset team showed their
13 mettle and toughness, as they once again overcame adversity to emerge victorious. The Chieftains
14 fell behind by 7 points in the first quarter and were behind by 10 points at one point in the second
15 quarter before roaring back to tie the game at half time. The Chieftains once again had to climb
16 out of a hole when they fell behind again, this time by 9 points in the fourth quarter before
17 storming back to force overtime, thanks to a putback by Malia Ellis and a clutch 3-pointer by
18 Javiana Stec, both freshmen; and

19 WHEREAS, In overtime, the Chieftains outstanding team defense led the way as they

1 made a couple of key steals and caused an important turnover when they prevented Moses Brown
2 from successfully inbounding the ball, thereby causing a 5 second violation on Moses Brown.
3 The Chieftains then sealed the victory and closed the door on a Moses Brown comeback when
4 they made most of their free throws under pressure in the waning moments of the game, thereby
5 winning a thrilling championship game that will be long remembered in Rhode Island high school
6 sports lore; and

7 WHEREAS, Winning a State Championship in a team sport is a difficult achievement
8 that can only be accomplished when every player gives everything they have and puts team needs
9 ahead of individual desires. The Ponaganset 2024-2025 Girls Basketball Team had those
10 attributes in abundance as they benefited all season by the outstanding play provided by Senior
11 Captains Kelsey L'heureux and Anastasia Nerney, and seniors Layla Bucci, Marley Haynes and
12 Kaylin Couto, Junior Elena Muldowney, Sophomores Giuliana Bachini, Marron Nerney, Kaitlyn
13 Simoneau, and Freshmen Jennie Bernardi, Lyla Briggs, Malia Ellis, Brigid Mara, Javiana Stec
14 and Zoey Thorp. The Team also benefited all season from the innovative coaching provided by
15 Head Coach Gary Martinelli; now, therefore be it

16 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island hereby
17 joyously congratulates the Ponaganset Girls Basketball Team on winning the 2024-2025 Rhode
18 Island Interscholastic League Girls Basketball State Championship; and be it further

19 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
20 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Mr. Gary Martinelli, Head Coach, Ponaganset
21 Girls Basketball Team.

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