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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

HOUSE RESOLUTION

HONORING AND CONGRATULATING EVAN SMITH ON THE OCCASION OF HIS
RETIREMENT AS PRESIDENT AND CEO OF DISCOVER NEWPORT

Introduced By: Representatives Carson, Abney, Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Chippendale,
Cortvriend, McGaw, Edwards, Donovan, and Tanzi

Date Introduced: April 24, 2025

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, Evan Smith, CEO and President of Discover Newport, retired on Friday,
2 February 28, 2025, after more than 40 years working in myriad segments of the travel industry;
3 and

4 WHEREAS, Mr. Smith began his illustrious career selling European and Caribbean
5 vacations for Value Vacations, after which he relocated to Connecticut, where he spent five years
6 employed with the Sheraton/Hartford and then Water's Edge Resort in hotel sales and
7 management; and

8 WHEREAS, In 1988, Mr. Smith moved to Newport, where he became the Director of
9 Sales for the Treadway Inn and Resort, and in 1990, he joined the newly created Newport County
10 Convention and Visitor Bureau, now known as Discover Newport, where he served as Director of
11 Marketing and Tourism Development; and

12 WHEREAS, In May of 2000, Mr. Smith was promoted to Vice President of Tourism
13 Marketing, and in 2005, he was named President and CEO of Discover Newport, the position he
14 held until his recent retirement; and

15 WHEREAS, In his capacity as head of Discover Newport, Mr. Smith was successful in
16 forming strong collaborations with numerous organizations in order to carry out a strategic plan
17 that promoted both the State's coastal communities as well as business and leisure travel; and

18 WHEREAS, Mr. Smith's accomplishments also include increasing the organization's
19 promotional budget from \$2 million to more than \$5 million over the past twenty years, and

1 helping to guide Discover Newport through COVID, by avoiding a total shut-down and restoring
2 revenue generation to higher than pre-COVID levels; and

3 WHEREAS, Throughout his tenure with Discover Newport, Mr. Smith has played a key
4 role in working to keep the Newport Mansions open during the winter months, which has helped
5 to build the City's winter tourist season, and also cultivated the cruise ship industry in Newport
6 and international markets; and

7 WHEREAS, Devoted to the community, Mr. Smith has been involved in a panoply of
8 local boards and commissions including, serving as chair, co-chair or a member of the Tall Ships,
9 the rededication of the Bellevue Avenue parade, the Volvo Ocean Race, the Newport Pell Bridge
10 50th Anniversary Committee, serving two terms on the Destinations International Board of
11 Directors, and as a member of the Board of Directors for the Greater Newport County Chamber
12 of Commerce, Touro Synagogue and many others. He also created the first New England
13 Tourism Improvement District in 2018; and

14 WHEREAS, During Mr. Smith's decades-long career, he has helped to evolve Discover
15 Newport into a powerful economic engine for Newport and Bristol counties as well as our State,
16 and he is eminently worthy of our gratitude and recognition; now, therefore be it

17 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island hereby
18 honors and congratulates Evan Smith on the occasion of his retirement, and acknowledges and
19 thanks him for all the contributions he has made to Newport, Bristol County, and the people of
20 our State. We furthermore wish him the very best of health and continued success in all his future
21 endeavors; and be it further

22 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
23 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Mr. Evan Smith.

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