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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

HOUSE RESOLUTION

EXPRESSING CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF THE HONORABLE BARBARA
BALCH COLT

Introduced By: Representatives Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Shanley, Ajello, Chippendale,
Fellela, Tanzi, Fogarty, McNamara, and Bennett
Date Introduced: January 15, 2026

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, It is with deep sadness that this House has learned of the passing of the
2 Honorable Barbara Balch Colt, a longtime and distinguished feminist, activist and community
3 leader. She was the beloved wife of Timothy Pickering Colt for 67 years; and
4 WHEREAS, Barbara Balch Colt was born in Utica, New York, the daughter of Richard
5 and Elizabeth Balch. She attended the public schools in Utica, New York, and then proceeded to
6 attend the Emma Willard School in Troy, New York, graduating in 1953, and later Mt. Holyoke
7 College, graduating in 1957. She married the love of her life, Timothy Pickering Colt, in 1958
8 and together they settled in Warwick in 1966, when Tim accepted a position with the then
9 Providence Journal—Bulletin. Barbara, while having four young children, completed her studies
10 in Urban Planning at the University of Rhode Island; and
11 WHEREAS, Barbara Balch Colt had always been interested in and deeply involved in
12 community affairs, public service and politics. In 1972, she won a seat on the Warwick City
13 Council, representing a mostly Republican Ward. During her four-year tenure, she was the only
14 woman on the Warwick City Council and served her constituents with passion and abiding
15 integrity. She was widely respected by her peers and the press, with the Warwick Beacon
16 describing her as being the Council’s “Fiscal Watchdog”; and
17 WHEREAS, After leaving office, Barbara remained active in politics. She was well
18 ahead of her time with her vigorous and passionate support of women’s rights, reproductive
19 freedom, gender equity and LGBTQ+ rights. Barbara was an early supporter of the National

1 Women’s Political Caucus and later sat on the Board of the 2:1 Coalition to Preserve Choice and
2 Planned Parenthood of Rhode Island, serving as the President of Planned Parenthood for several
3 years. Recently, Barbara had devoted much of her time serving as a mentor and advisor to The
4 Womxn Project, whose mission is to secure reproductive freedom, gender equity, and LGBTQ+
5 rights in Rhode Island; and

6 WHEREAS, Barbara Balch Colt also passionately believed in providing affordable health
7 care and housing for all people. She served as the Executive Director of the Rhode Island
8 Community Health Centers and worked nonstop to create the Neighborhood Health Plan of
9 Rhode Island, a not-for-profit health maintenance organization. Barbara also served on the Board
10 of the Women’s Development Corporation for more than thirty years, serving at times as its
11 Treasurer. Barbara also served with distinction on the Rhode Island Coastal Resources
12 Management Council and on the Board of Directors of Butler Hospital; and

13 WHEREAS, In her free time, Barbara enjoyed traveling widely with her husband Tim.
14 She particularly enjoyed going to the beach and making a stop for some ice cream. She read
15 voraciously and loved knitting, but few things made her happier than spending time with her
16 grandchildren and knitting sweaters and holiday hats for them. She also joined the Handicraft
17 Club, later served as its Treasurer, and loved sharing with family and friends her painted and
18 stenciled works and needlepoint creations. Barbara also appreciated live theatre and attending
19 Rhode Island Philharmonic concerts. Most importantly, Barbara was a devoted wife, mother,
20 grandmother, sister and a great friend to many; and

21 WHEREAS, Barbara Balch Colt leaves behind her husband, Tim, her children, Elizabeth
22 Colt and her husband, Kent Fields, Cynthia Colt and her husband, Sid Fernando, Timothy P. Colt,
23 Jr. and his wife, Lisa Sherman Colt, and Jonathan B. Colt. She also leaves behind her brother
24 Richard H. Balch, Jr., and his wife, Judy, six grandchildren, Nicholas and Sarah Colt, Joseph
25 Fernando, Chase, Maximilian and Cary Fields, and four great-grandchildren. She was
26 predeceased by her grandson, Johnny Fernando, her brother James Balch and her sister, Cynthia
27 Barns; now, therefore be it

28 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island hereby
29 expresses its deepest condolences to the Balch Colt Family on the passing of the Honorable
30 Barbara Balch Colt; and be it further

31 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
32 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Mr. Timothy Pickering Colt and Family.

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