

2026 -- H 8239

=====
LC006005
=====

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

HOUSE RESOLUTION

EXPRESSING DEEPEST CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF MANUEL PEDROSO

Introduced By: Representatives Blazejewski, Solomon, Shekarchi, Chippendale, Ajello,
Kennedy, Fellela, Shallcross Smith, Hull, and McNamara

Date Introduced: March 05, 2026

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, It is with deep sadness that this House of Representatives has learned of the
2 passing of Manuel Pedroso at the age of 106; and

3 WHEREAS, Manuel Pedroso was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts, in 1919. Mr.
4 Pedroso was only three years old when he was taken to Portugal with his parents and brother. He
5 was raised in Alvados, Porto de Mós, and later graduated from the Escola Comercial e Industrial
6 de Domingos Sequeira in Leiria. Inspired by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the
7 promise of opportunity and freedom in the United States, Mr. Pedroso returned to his birth
8 country in 1942; and

9 WHEREAS, Mr. Pedroso settled in Providence during World War II and became a
10 skilled welder at the Walsh-Kaiser shipyard, helping to build liberty ships in support of
11 America's war effort. Following the war, Mr. Pedroso served our nation with distinction for two
12 years as a member of the United States Merchant Marine, after which he returned to Providence
13 and married the love of his life, Marie Pedroso. Together they built a beautiful marriage and
14 celebrated 77 wonderful years together; and

15 WHEREAS, For more than six decades, Mr. Pedroso owned and operated Friends Market
16 in the Fox Point neighborhood of Providence, which is now recognized as the oldest Portuguese-
17 American market still in operation. Friends Market was far more significant than merely being
18 another neighborhood business. Friends Market was the heart and soul of the community. It was a
19 warm and welcoming gathering place where Portuguese immigrants reunited and shared their
20 memories and exchanged stories about "the old country", and how they built new lives and made

1 new lifelong friendships; and

2 WHEREAS, Mr. Pedroso was affectionately known as the “Father of the Portuguese-
3 American community in Rhode Island.” He mentored countless new immigrants, helped them
4 secure employment, assisted with applications, tutored many who were preparing for their
5 naturalization exams, and sponsored many families to reunite them in America. He always
6 encouraged new immigrants to embrace American citizenship, to vote, to speak their minds, and
7 maintain their cultural roots and heritage; and

8 WHEREAS, Manuel Pedroso’s immense contributions to our state have been lauded and
9 heralded in many quarters. Nobel Laureate José Saramago featured Mr. Pedroso in his series of
10 memoirs, Cadernos de Lanzarote. In 2019, Mr. Pedroso was honored as the “Man of the Century”
11 by the Rhode Island Day of Portugal Committee. In 2022, the City of Providence gave a portion
12 of Sheldon Street the honorary name of “Pedroso Way”, guaranteeing that his name will forever
13 be enshrined in the neighborhood he loved and cherished for most of his life. Mr. Pedroso also
14 received the “Order of Merit” from the President of the Portuguese Republic in 2024; and

15 WHEREAS, Manuel Pedroso was an active member of numerous organizations including
16 the Pawtucket Social Club, the Cranston Portuguese Club, the Cranston Portuguese Rod and Gun
17 Club, Cavaqueiros, and the Club Juventude Lusitania Cumberland. He was also an honorary
18 member of the Portuguese Heritage Choir of Rhode Island and Our Lady of the Rosary Band, and
19 was a parishioner of Our Lady of the Rosary Church for 84 years; and

20 WHEREAS, Manuel Pedroso is survived by his beloved wife, Maria Pedroso, and their
21 children, Manuel A. Pedroso and his wife, Jane Pedroso, and Eileen Maria Pedroso Afonso and
22 her husband, José Manuel Afonso. Mr. Pedroso also leaves behind his sister, Olivia Calado, and
23 was predeceased by his siblings Antonio Pedroso and Elias Pedroso. Mr. Pedroso also leaves
24 behind his grandchildren, Dorrie Eaton and her husband, Mark Eaton, and Kristen Pedroso and
25 her husband, Shaun Jones, Phillip Afonso, Diana Marie Afonso, and Andrew Afonso, and his
26 great-grandchildren, Kylie Eaton, Adriana Eaton, Noah Pedroso Jones, Lucia Pedroso Jones, and
27 Arabella Afonso Allen; 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 Pedroso Family on the passing of Manuel Pedroso; and
30 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 Mrs. Maria Pedroso and Family.

=====
LC006005
=====