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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

HOUSE RESOLUTION

CELEBRATING THE 172ND ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED STATES AND JAPAN
TREATY OF PEACE AND AMITY

Introduced By: Representatives Kennedy, Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Chippendale,
Azzinaro, Edwards, Bennett, Diaz, Tanzi, and Ajello
Date Introduced: March 31, 2026

Referred To: House read and passed

- 1 WHEREAS, The State of Rhode Island and Japan share a long and meaningful history of
- 2 cultural exchange, cooperation, and friendship; and
- 3 WHEREAS, The first official diplomatic contact between the United States and Japan
- 4 occurred in 1853, when Commodore Matthew Perry, a native of South Kingstown, Rhode Island,
- 5 led an expedition of “Black Ships” to Japan under orders from President Millard Fillmore; and
- 6 WHEREAS, This expedition resulted in the signing of the Treaty of Peace and Amity
- 7 between the United States and Japan on March 31, 1854, marking the beginning of formal
- 8 diplomatic relations and expanded interaction and trade between the two nations; and
- 9 WHEREAS, Japan has been the largest non-domestic investor in the United States for six
- 10 consecutive years, supporting nearly one million American jobs, and the United States has
- 11 likewise been the leading outside investor in Japan; and
- 12 WHEREAS, The strong local economic relationship between Rhode Island and Japan is
- 13 demonstrated by Japanese companies, including Toray Plastics (America), which is celebrating
- 14 its 100th anniversary this year, and Fujifilm, operating in Rhode Island as well as by numerous
- 15 Rhode Island-based businesses engaged in trade with Japan; and
- 16 WHEREAS, The relationship between the United States and Japan is characterized by
- 17 mutual respect, admiration, and a shared commitment to peace, understanding, and collaboration;
- 18 and
- 19 WHEREAS, Rhode Island and Japan maintain strong partnerships across many fields,

1 including commerce, academia, education, technology, the arts, and culture; and

2 WHEREAS, Educational and cultural exchanges between Rhode Island and Japan have

3 provided invaluable opportunities for students, scholars, artists, and professionals to learn from

4 one another, share experiences, and build lasting connections that enhance cross-cultural and

5 international understanding; and

6 WHEREAS, Through diverse events such as the annual Black Ships Festival and Gala

7 hosted by the Japan-America Society of Rhode Island, the Japan-America Friendship Festival

8 organized by the Japan-America Society of Southern New England, the Cherry Blossom Princess

9 Crowning Ceremony presented by the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, celebrations of

10 Hachiko the legendary loyal Akita dog’s birthday in Woonsocket, and popular culture events such

11 as Providence AnimeCon, Rhode Islanders continue to celebrate and embrace Japanese culture

12 and foster warm friendships with Japan; and

13 WHEREAS, In Japan, tens of thousands of people annually attend the Black Ships

14 Festival in Shimoda, a sister city to Newport, and the Perry Festival in Yokosuka,

15 commemorating historical ties with Commodore Perry and the United States; and

16 WHEREAS, The Rhode Island School of Design Museum promotes research and public

17 understanding of Japanese art through current and forthcoming exhibitions and international

18 collaboration with the Chiba City Museum of Art, including touring exhibitions of its Japanese

19 art collection throughout Japan; and

20 WHEREAS, The Naval War College in Newport and the Japan Maritime Self-Defense

21 Force work closely together to promote national security and regional stability through shared

22 resources, strategies, and commitments; and

23 WHEREAS, This year marks the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States,

24 a milestone underscoring the enduring importance of the U.S. and Japan alliance and the

25 continued strengthening of friendly relations and broad-ranging cooperation between the two

26 nations; and

27 WHEREAS, The Japan-United States Summit meeting held in Washington, D.C. on

28 March 19, 2026, underscores the importance of deepening the friendly relations between Japan

29 and the United States, as well as broad-ranging Japan-U.S. cooperation, including economy and

30 security, and demonstrated the unwavering Japan-U.S. Alliance; now, therefore be it

31 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island hereby

32 celebrates the longstanding and meaningful relationship between the United States and Japan and

33 recognizes the contributions of individuals, organizations, and institutions that have worked

34 tirelessly to promote friendship, cooperation, and mutual understanding between the two

1 countries; and be it further

2 RESOLVED, That this House hereby honors the 172nd anniversary of the signing of the
3 U.S.–Japan Treaty of Peace and Amity and declares March 31, the date on which the treaty was
4 signed in 1854, as “Japan Day” in the State of Rhode Island, while encouraging continued
5 collaboration and partnership between the United States and Japan and reaffirming a shared
6 commitment to peace, prosperity, and mutual respect for future generations; and be it further

7 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
8 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the President of the United States; United States
9 Senator Jack Reed; United States Senator Sheldon Whitehouse; United States Representative Seth
10 Magaziner; United States Representative Gabe Amo; Rhode Island Governor Dan McKee; Rhode
11 Island Lieutenant Governor Sabina Matos; Rhode Island Treasurer James Diossa; Rhode Island
12 Secretary of State Gregg Amore; and the Honorable Seiichiro Takahashi, Consul General of
13 Japan in Boston.

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