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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

HOUSE RESOLUTION

CONGRATULATING THE AMERICAN HELLENIC EDUCATIONAL PROGRESSIVE
ASSOCIATION (AHEPA) CHAPTER 106 "SOPHOCLES" OF PROVIDENCE ON THE
JOYOUS OCCASION OF ITS 100TH ANNIVERSARY

Introduced By: Representatives Solomon, Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Chippendale,
McNamara, Paplauskas, Casimiro, Casey, Edwards, and Bennett
Date Introduced: March 31, 2026

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, The American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA) was
2 founded in 1922 in Atlanta, Georgia, during a time of intense discrimination against Greek
3 immigrants in the United States. Established in response to bigotry and hostility—particularly
4 from the Ku Klux Klan—AHEPA stands for civil rights, justice, and the full integration of Greek
5 Americans into the civic life of this nation. AHEPA is rooted in the timeless Hellenic ideals of
6 education, philanthropy, civic responsibility, and family and personal excellence. AHEPA grew
7 to become the largest and oldest grassroots association of American citizens of Greek heritage
8 and Philhellenes, with chapters throughout the United States, Canada, Australia, and Europe; and

9 WHEREAS, AHEPA Chapter 106 “Sophocles” of Providence was founded on May 30,
10 1926, and for a century has served as a pillar of leadership, service and cultural pride in Rhode
11 Island. In 2026, the chapter marks its 100th anniversary, a milestone commemorated at its
12 Centennial Gala on June 13, 2026, at the historic Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet, reflecting one hundred
13 years of continuous service, leadership, and community engagement. For generations, the chapter
14 has been a cornerstone of the Greek-American community of Rhode Island, promoting Hellenic
15 culture and heritage while striving to help its members become good American citizens,
16 encouraging civic-mindedness, and fostering a deep commitment to the enduring values and
17 democratic ideals of this country; and

18 WHEREAS, From its earliest years, Chapter 106 established itself as a respected and
19 effective civic organization whose influence has spanned generations. In 1939, the chapter

1 proudly hosted the 16th Supreme Convention of the Order of AHEPA, welcoming thousands of
2 delegates and visitors to Rhode Island and highlighting the strength of the local Greek-American
3 community. At that convention, the chapter dedicated the Samuel Gridley Howe Memorial
4 Flagpole, which still stands at Brown University today, honoring Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe, the
5 distinguished American physician, humanitarian, abolitionist, and Philhellene who served as a
6 volunteer surgeon during the Greek War of Independence; and

7 WHEREAS, Throughout its history, Chapter 106 has demonstrated an unwavering
8 commitment to education and youth, maintaining a long-standing scholarship program that has
9 supported students and families for decades. The chapter also fosters intergenerational
10 mentorship, creating enduring bonds of friendship and leadership within the community. As part
11 of its support for youth development, the chapter provides an annual award to students who excel
12 in the Greek Language School program of the Church of the Annunciation and hosts an annual
13 luncheon recognizing Sunday School students; and

14 WHEREAS, Locally, Chapter 106 maintains a deep and enduring partnership with the
15 Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation of Cranston, where members generously give their
16 time, treasure, and talent in support of parish life, cultural programs, and community events,
17 including the Cranston Greek Festival. Through this volunteerism, leadership, and charitable
18 support, the chapter helps strengthen the cultural and communal foundation of the local Greek-
19 American community; and

20 WHEREAS, The chapter's record of philanthropy and service is extensive. Members
21 raised substantial funds in support of the American war effort during World War II through the
22 purchase of war bonds and later provided relief to Greece in the aftermath of the war. Many
23 Brothers have also honorably served in the Armed Forces of the United States. The chapter has
24 long supported public health initiatives, including fundraising and awareness efforts for Cooley's
25 Anemia, and has been a national leader in support of Saint Basil Academy in Garrison, New
26 York—so significantly that a hall there is named in honor of former Chapter President, Supreme
27 Treasurer, and Chairman of the AHEPA Board of Trustees, Spiro C. Samaras; and

28 WHEREAS, Chapter 106 has also played an important role in public affairs and Hellenic
29 advocacy, supporting strong relations between the United States and Greece, advocating for
30 justice in Cyprus, and assisting refugees following the 1974 Turkish invasion while maintaining
31 close relationships with local, state, national, and Greek officials. The chapter is working
32 alongside Rhode Island State Senator Leonidas Raptakis on the Rhode Island Hellenic Heritage
33 License Plate initiative. Chapter 106 regularly participates in the annual Greek Independence Day
34 observances at the Rhode Island State House hosted by Senator Raptakis, as well as other civic

1 commemorations honoring Hellenic heritage and American democratic ideals; and

2 WHEREAS, For one hundred years, AHEPA Chapter 106 “Sophocles” has embodied the
3 values upon which AHEPA was founded—service, faith, patriotism, education, community
4 leadership, family and personal excellence, and the preservation and promotion of Hellenic
5 heritage—making a lasting impact on Rhode Island and proudly sustaining its cultural legacy for
6 future generations; now, therefore be it

7 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island hereby
8 joyously congratulates the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA)
9 Chapter 106 “Sophocles” of Providence on the joyous occasion of its 100th Anniversary; and be
10 it further

11 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
12 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to the President of AHEPA Chapter 106
13 "Sophocles" of Providence, Mr. George Coclin.

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