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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

HOUSE RESOLUTION

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF RHODE ISLAND AND MAJOR LEAGUE
BASEBALL ALL-TIME GREAT, HALL OF FAMER NAPOLEON "NAP" LAJOIE

Introduced By: Representatives J. Brien, Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Chippendale, Phillips,
Casey, Santucci, Potter, Cruz, and Kennedy

Date Introduced: April 30, 2026

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, Napoleon Lajoie, better known as Nap Lajoie, was born on September 5,
2 1874, in Woonsocket, to Jean-Baptiste and Celina Guertin Lajoie. Lajoie's father was a French-
3 Canadian immigrant who immigrated to the United States, first to Vermont, and later to
4 Woonsocket, where Nap Lajoie was born; and

5 WHEREAS, When Nap's father died, he and his siblings were forced to leave school and
6 work to support the family. Nap worked in textile mills and in his free time, played semi-
7 professional baseball, where word of his prowess on the baseball diamond rapidly spread. Nap
8 played center field, first base, and catcher for the New England League's Fall River Indians,
9 leading the team in batting average, doubles, triples, home runs and hits; and

10 WHEREAS, Lajoie's contract was purchased by the Philadelphia Phillies and he made his
11 Major League debut on August 12, 1896, against the Washington Senators, playing first base and
12 recording a single. Lajoie moved to second base later in the season, and in 39 games, batted an
13 outstanding .326 in his short rookie season. He promptly followed his auspicious start with a
14 stellar second season, batting .363 and leading the National League in doubles and RBIs. He
15 batted .324 in 1898, and during injury-shortened seasons, Lajoie batted .378 in 1899 and .337 in
16 1900; and

17 WHEREAS, In 1901, Lajoie moved to the Philadelphia Athletics in the new American
18 League, and, in his prime at the age of 26, proceeded to put on a display of baseball greatness,
19 batting .426, the highest batting average ever recorded by an American League player, and led the

1 majors in batting average, doubles, hits, runs, on-base percentage, slugging percentage and total
2 bases. Lajoie also led the American League in home runs and runs batted in, and won the
3 American League Triple Crown, compiling one of the greatest seasons in Major League Baseball
4 history; and

5 WHEREAS, The notoriously frugal Connie Mack, owner of the Athletics, sold Lajoie to
6 Cleveland rather than pay the salary he was worth. In his injury-shortened first season in
7 Cleveland, Lajoie batted .379, and then proceeded in the 1903 and 1904 seasons, to lead the
8 American League in batting average. The Cleveland fans were so enthralled with Lajoie that the
9 club decided in 1903 to change its name to the Cleveland Naps, the team's nickname through the
10 1914 season; and

11 WHEREAS, Lajoie remained with Cleveland until the 1914 season and continued to play
12 standout baseball, including leading the American League in batting average once again in 1910
13 with a .383 average. He played his final two seasons with the Philadelphia Athletics, retiring after
14 the 1916 season. Lajoie was also widely considered to be an excellent defensive second baseman;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, Lajoie's baseball statistics are astounding to consider. He had a career .338
17 batting average and compiled 3,243 hits, 657 doubles, 1,599 runs batted in, 1,504 runs scored,
18 and a .380 on-base percentage. He led the American League in batting average 5 times, while
19 winning the Triple Crown in 1901. Modern statistical analysis further confirms his greatness with
20 the Wins Above Replacement metric indicating that Lajoie was the best everyday position player
21 in the American League 7 times: 1901, 1903, 1904, 1906, 1907, 1908, and 1910; and

22 WHEREAS, Nap Lajoie was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1937, the second
23 group to be inducted. He received more Hall of Fame votes than both Tris Speaker and Cy
24 Young. Nap Lajoie had the great honor of being inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame the year
25 it opened in 1939 with other baseball greats including Babe Ruth. Lajoie is also included in the
26 famous baseball history poem by Ogden Nash, "Line-Up for Yesterday", published in Sport
27 Magazine in January of 1949, which states, in part, "L is for Lajoie, Whom Clevelanders love,
28 Napoleon himself, with glue in his glove"; now, therefore be it

29 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island hereby
30 honors the life and legacy of baseball great and Rhode Island and Woonsocket native, Napoleon
31 "Nap" Lajoie; and be it further

32 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
33 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Dr. Gregory Rubano, Chairman of the
34 Unearthing Our Treasure: Napoleon Lajoie campaign.

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