

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

SENATE RESOLUTION

**COMMEMORATING MAY 4, 2026, AS RHODE ISLAND INDEPENDENCE DAY AND
THE 250TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S HISTORIC ACT OF
RENUNCIATION**

Introduced By: Senators Lawson, and Zurier

Date Introduced: April 30, 2026

Referred To: Recommended for Immediate Consideration

1 WHEREAS, On June 9, 1772, Rhode Islanders attacked and burned the H.M.S. Gaspee
2 in one of the first acts of open defiance against the British Crown; and

3 WHEREAS, During 1773-74, Rhode Islanders participated in Committees of
4 Correspondence to share intelligence and coordinate resistance to English authorities among the
5 13 colonies; and

6 WHEREAS, Following the 1775 battles of Lexington and Concord, Rhode Island raised
7 militias and sent forces to relieve the siege of Boston; and

8 WHEREAS, During the months that followed, Rhode Island began to resist royal
9 authority; and

10 WHEREAS, On May 4, 1776, both houses of the Rhode Island General Assembly met
11 for session at the Providence Colony House at 150 Benefit Street; and

12 WHEREAS, At that session, the General Assembly approved the Act of Renunciation,
13 repealing prior legislation that had pledged allegiance to the English Crown; and

14 WHEREAS, The Rhode Island General Assembly's Act of Renunciation was the first
15 and only legislation of its kind among the thirteen colonies in British North America; and

16 WHEREAS, On July 4, 1776, the Continental Congress approved the Declaration of
17 Independence, which was signed by Rhode Islanders Stephen Hopkins and William Ellery, and
18 which the Rhode Island General Assembly, meeting at the Newport Colony House, formally
19 ratified on July 19, 1776; and

1 WHEREAS, Rhode Islanders made important contributions to the American Revolution,
2 including the brilliant generalship of Nathanael Greene; and

3 WHEREAS, After the conclusion of the Revolution and the formation of the United
4 States of America under the Articles of Confederation, Rhode Island persisted in its independent
5 streak, refusing to attend the Constitutional Convention; and

6 WHEREAS, In 1788, Rhode Island at first voted against ratifying the United States
7 Constitution, but became the last of the 13 states to do so in 1790 after pressure from Congress
8 and assurances of the passage of the Constitution’s Bill of Rights; and

9 WHEREAS, On May 26, 1908, the Rhode Island General Assembly passed Public Laws
10 Section 1591, declaring the fourth of May as Rhode Island Independence Day to be
11 commemorated as a “just tribute to the memory of the members of the general assembly who
12 passed an act renouncing allegiance of the colony to the British Crown . . . the first official act
13 of its kind by any of the thirteen American colonies”; now, therefore be it

14 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island hereby commemorates May
15 4, 2026 as Rhode Island Independence Day and the 250th anniversary of the General Assembly’s
16 historic Act of Renunciation; and be it further

17 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
18 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to the Honorable Daniel J. McKee, Governor of
19 the State of Rhode Island, and the Rhode Island Congressional Delegation.

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