

2022 -- S 2951

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2022

SENATE RESOLUTION

EXTENDING DEEPEST CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF MARY DONNELLY

Introduced By: Senator V. Susan Sosnowski

Date Introduced: May 19, 2022

Referred To: Placed on the Senate Consent Calendar

1 WHEREAS, It is with sadness that this Senate has learned of the passing of Mary
2 Donnelly, a registered nurse who cared deeply and generously for Block Island's residents for
3 more than 55 years; and

4 WHEREAS, In 1958, Mary Donnelly arrived on Block Island with her husband and her
5 growing family for what was supposed to be a temporary assignment, but soon became a lifetime
6 of caring for the medical needs of island residents and ultimately included establishing a
7 charitable fund to help those in need to pay utility bills, mortgage payments, tuition and medical
8 bills, or buy food or heating oil; and

9 WHEREAS, As the only licensed medical professional on the island, Mrs. Donnelly
10 worked with the rescue squad, served as President of the Medical Services Committee, and was
11 one of the founders of the Block Island Medical Center, where she worked when not making
12 whatever house calls and home visits were needed; and

13 WHEREAS, In 1984, after seeing first-hand the plight of many of her island neighbors,
14 Mrs. Donnelly established The Mary D. Fund, a nonprofit which was funded by collection jar
15 donations placed around the island, as well as generous donations from various benefactors, and
16 the annual Mary D. Ball. Each year, she was able to raise and allocate about \$50,000 to islanders
17 in need; and

18 WHEREAS, Mrs. Donnelly continued her nursing until 2013, when at the age of 85, she
19 finally retired, but with the help of her daughter, she remained active with the Mary D. Fund until
20 2021; and

1 WHEREAS, In 2021, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Providence recognized Mrs.
2 Donnelly with the Lumen Gentium Award in Community Service and Charitable Outreach for
3 her efforts on behalf of Block Islanders. She was also honored many times with various news
4 pieces about her efforts and devotion to the poor; and

5 WHEREAS, A woman of deep faith, Mary Donnelly had been a parish trustee, and
6 served as lector, Eucharistic minister, parish council, finance council, and leader in the Ladies
7 Guild; and

8 WHEREAS, Mary Donnelly's large and loving family included her late husband, John
9 Donnelly, and seven children, Marguerite Donnelly, Patricia Hiller, Mary Ann Tapia, Elizabeth
10 Masci, Michael Donnelly, and the late John Donnelly Jr., and Kathleen Donnelly. She was also
11 the beloved grandmother of six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren; and

12 WHEREAS, There is no doubt that Mary Donnelly, a truly admirable and amazing
13 woman, left Block Island a far better place because of her life's work. She enriched the lives of
14 all who knew her, and her empathy and compassion for those in need was boundless and an
15 inspiration to us all; now, therefore be it

16 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island hereby extends deepest
17 condolences on the passing of Mary Donnelly; and be it further

18 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
19 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to Marguerite Donnelly, Patricia Hiller, Mary Ann
20 Tapia, Elizabeth Masci, and Michael Donnelly.

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