

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2023

HOUSE RESOLUTION

RECOGNIZING AND HONORING MARGARET BRENNAN AND GWYNNE MILLAR ON
RECEIVING THE PRESIDENTIAL INNOVATION AWARD FOR ENVIRONMENTAL
EDUCATORS (PIAEE)

Introduced By: Representatives McGaw, Cotter, Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Chippendale,
Cortvriend, McNamara, Donovan, DeSimone, and Ajello

Date Introduced: June 07, 2023

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, The Presidential Innovation Award for Environmental Educators recognizes
2 outstanding teachers “who employ innovative approaches to environmental education and use the
3 environment as a context for learning for their students”; and

4 WHEREAS, Learning is a process of discovering just who and what we are, and it is
5 often a teacher who puts before us the promise of who and what we may become. Both Margaret
6 Brennan and Gwynne Millar have inspired their students to envision the possibilities, to have
7 confidence in themselves and their abilities, and to believe in a future full of promise, and for
8 their dedication and excellence in teaching, they have earned this year’s Presidential Innovation
9 Award for Environmental Educators; and

10 WHEREAS, Ms. Brennan and Ms. Millar will receive a Presidential award plaque, an
11 award of up to \$2,500 to be used to further their professional development in environmental
12 education, and a congratulatory letter. Their respective school systems also receive an award of
13 up to \$2,500 to fund environmental educational activities and programs; and

14 WHEREAS, Margaret Brennan earned her Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees from the
15 University of Rhode Island, and after teaching in Tiverton and at the Thompson Middle School,
16 became a Science Coach at Portsmouth Middle School in August of 2019; and

17 WHEREAS, Ms. Brennan is a strong proponent of outdoor learning as the best way to
18 engage students. Putting this philosophy into practice, she and her class created a student-led
19 farm called Portsmouth AgInnovation. The project included writing multiple grants, engaging her

1 student's imaginations to brainstorm, research, and created a vision for the project, and seeing it
2 through the final execution of being built and completed; and

3 WHEREAS, Gwynne Millar is a mom, wife, Zumba Fitness Instructor, and a biology and
4 environmental sustainability teacher at Exeter-West Greenwich High School; and

5 WHEREAS, Ms. Millar envisions true learning as more than just memorization, so to put
6 her beliefs into action, she encourages her student to choose the problems they hope to solve
7 through experimentation and choice boards. Their decision was to investigate matter cycling, and
8 in particular, by investigating the problem of excessive food waste accumulating in the state's
9 only landfill and testing different composting methods in order to develop an effective program
10 for their school; and

11 WHEREAS, Every successful person in the Ocean State owes a great measure of their
12 achievement to the dedication and hard work of the teachers who inspired them to find the very
13 best in themselves and to make the most of that discovery. Margaret Brennan and Gwynne Millar
14 have certainly qualified as being the "best of the best" and have wholly distinguished themselves
15 as worthy of our praise and admiration; now, therefore be it

16 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island hereby
17 congratulates and honors Margaret Brennan and Gwynne Millar on receiving the Presidential
18 Innovation Award for Environmental Educators, and wishes them the very best of health,
19 happiness, and success in all their future endeavors; and be it further

20 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
21 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to Margaret Brennan and Gwynne Millar.

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