

2013 -- H 6215

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2013

H O U S E R E S O L U T I O N

**HONORING MYRA SHAYS' FIFTEEN YEARS OF SERVICE, DEDICATION, AND
LEADERSHIP TO THE GREATER PROVIDENCE CHAPTER OF PFLAG**

Introduced By: Representatives Ajello, Ruggiero, Shekarchi, Cimini, and Handy

Date Introduced: June 06, 2013

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, Myra Shays has dedicated the past fifteen years working tirelessly as
2 founder and past-President of the Greater Providence Chapter of the Parents, Friends & Families
3 of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG); and

4 WHEREAS, PFLAG is a grassroots, family-based support organization started in 1973
5 by a couple "who could no longer tolerate the bigotry and hatred suffered by their child and
6 millions of others"; and

7 WHEREAS, Four decades later, PFLAG has expanded to over 350 chapters located in
8 the United States and eleven other countries and is comprised of about 200,000 people; and

9 WHEREAS, While living in New York City, Myra Shays became a member of the New
10 York chapter of PFLAG when one of her daughters told her she was gay. The organization
11 brought Myra acceptance and understanding and the "urgency of the PFLAG mission" impelled
12 her to become more involved. She served on the New York Chapter's Board and also marched in
13 the five-mile-long Gay Pride Parade every year; and

14 WHEREAS, In 1994, Myra moved to Rhode Island to be near her grandchildren and
15 daughter and found there was no Providence chapter. Since PFLAG is a grassroots organization,
16 in 1998, she founded the Greater Providence Chapter; and

17 WHEREAS, Shortly thereafter, the organization blossomed with many members
18 contributing their talents, creating a website, brochure, mailing lists, and book lists, as well as
19 forming and joining the organization's Board of Directors. Myra led the monthly support group

1 meetings and provided support to parents and families on a one-to-one basis by phone, email, or
2 in person; and

3 WHEREAS, In addition, Myra testified at the State House for Marriage Equality
4 numerous times, marched in Gay Pride parades in Providence, and staffed a PFLAG booth every
5 year at the Gay Pride Festival. She responds to requests from schools for presentations to
6 students and writes for the chapter newsletter, speaks on radio and TV, and has published
7 numerous Op-Eds and letters to editors; and

8 WHEREAS, It is said that if you want something to get done, ask a busy person, and that
9 person would surely be Myra Shays. In addition to her work with PFLAG, she volunteers as a
10 writer, proofreader, and Resources editor at the Options LGBT News magazine, was a responder
11 on the LGBT Helpline, and has been a volunteer judge for the Academic Decathlon. She is active
12 in the Jewish Seniors Agency, visiting residents in nursing homes, is co-manager of the library in
13 her synagogue, where the weekly Bible study is a highlight of her week, and has served as
14 publicity chair for the RI chapter of Hadassah; and

15 WHEREAS, Over the years, the Providence Chapter of PFLAG has been a life-line to
16 hundreds of parents and families, guiding them though the journey to understand the sexual
17 orientation of their LGBT children. The organization's and Myra's philosophy on life should well
18 be the mantra for all families and people around the world: simply to love and accept one another;
19 now, therefore be it

20 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island and
21 Providence Plantations hereby honors and thanks Myra Shays for fifteen years of dedicated
22 service to the Greater Providence Chapter of PFLAG and to decades of devotion to the betterment
23 of our world; and be it further

24 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
25 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Myra Shays.

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