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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2014

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

EXPRESSING PROFOUND SYMPATHY ON THE PASSING OF MAYA ANGELOU

Introduced By: Representatives Williams, Hull, Abney, McNamara, and Lima

Date Introduced: May 29, 2014

Referred To: House read and passed

1           WHEREAS, It is with great sadness that this House has learned of the passing of Maya  
2 Angelou, a legendary litterateur, a luminary for equality and justice, and an inspiration for our  
3 generation; and

4           WHEREAS, As a child, Maya Angelou studied dance and drama. By age fourteen, she  
5 had dropped out of school. At age sixteen, she was the first female streetcar driver in San  
6 Francisco, and by seventeen, she was a single-mother; and

7           WHEREAS, Conquering a life that was filled with twists and turns and struggles, Maya  
8 Angelou found her success and her strength in ingenuity and creativity; and

9           WHEREAS, In the mid 50s, Maya Angelou toured Europe in an opera production, and in  
10 1957, she recorded her first album. By 1958, she had joined the Harlem Writers Guild and was  
11 acting in an off Broadway play; and

12           WHEREAS, There is an old proverb, "From humble beginnings come great things."  
13 From a young girl living in poverty with very little formal education in a racially segregated  
14 town, Maya Angelou became a woman who spoke at least six languages and had been awarded  
15 more than 30 honorary degrees. She wrote seven autobiographies, including the highly acclaimed  
16 "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," three books of essays, and several books of poetry. She also  
17 taught at a University and worked as a newspaper editor in Egypt and Ghana; and

18           WHEREAS, In 1993, at President Clinton's first inauguration, Maya Angelou inspired  
19 this nation when she read "On the Pulse of Morning," a poem that celebrates diversity; and

20           WHEREAS, Speaking in her moving and melodious voice, with words filled with hope,

1 she stood alongside such civil rights leaders and activists as Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks, and  
2 Malcolm X, and heartened this nation to change; and

3 WHEREAS, Over the course of her lifetime, Maya Angelou was awarded myriad honors  
4 including a Pulitzer Prize nomination, a Tony Award nomination, three Grammys for her spoken  
5 word albums, the National Medal of Arts in 2000, the Lincoln Medal in 2008, and the  
6 Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2011; and

7 WHEREAS, Her good friend and student, Oprah Winfrey, described Maya Angelou a  
8 woman who "moved through the world with unshakeable calm, confidence and a fierce grace";  
9 now, therefore be it

10 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island and  
11 Providence Plantations hereby expresses our deepest sympathies on the passing of Maya  
12 Angelou. She will forever be remembered for her efforts to uplift and enrich our lives through her  
13 beautiful words and noble deeds.

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