

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2015

SENATE RESOLUTION

HONORING BANNISTER HOUSE ON ITS 125TH ANNIVERSARY AND RESPECTFULLY REQUESTING THAT GOVERNOR GINA RAIMONDO CONVENE MEETING AMONGST ALL STAKEHOLDERS TO FIND A WAY TO KEEP BANNISTER HOUSE OPEN

Introduced By: Senators Metts, Pichardo, Nesselbush, Algieri, and Walaska

Date Introduced: April 16, 2015

Referred To: Recommended for Immediate Consideration

1 WHEREAS, The Bannister House origins began in 1890, when a group of citizens
2 gathering at the Meeting Street Methodist Church were concerned about the living conditions of
3 elderly African-American women. Mrs. Christiana Bannister, the wife of African-American
4 landscape artist Edward Bannister, sought out aid from donors to support this cause. With land on
5 the East Side of Providence donated by the Shepherd Family, a building with twelve residents
6 was opened on April 16, 1890. Thus began Bannister House's legacy of providing care to those
7 no longer able to care for themselves; and

8 WHEREAS, By the 1960s it became clear that Bannister House had to expand in order to
9 meet the increasing needs of the elderly population. Former United States Senator John Chafee
10 chaired a fundraising campaign and with land donated by Ebenezer Baptist Church, a new multi-
11 level building was opened on April 27, 1974, on 135 Dodge Street in Providence; and

12 WHEREAS, Bannister House, in its 125 year history, has always served those in need,
13 regardless of race, color, sex, religion, age, country of origin, or disability. The staff, which
14 currently numbers 125 people, has always worked tirelessly and diligently to promote the health
15 and well-being of all of its residents. Bannister House provides nursing services, social services,
16 nutritional services, and individual and group activities to all of its residents. In many ways,
17 Bannister House is one large and loving family with a kind, caring, and compassionate staff
18 always doing its best to take care of the residents they deeply care about; and

19 WHEREAS, Unfortunately, Bannister House currently faces a financial crisis, with deep

1 debt burdens that threaten to close this much-needed community institution. It is imperative that
2 Governor Gina Raimondo call a meeting of all stakeholders as soon as possible to explore every
3 possible way of keeping Bannister House open. Closing Bannister House would potentially
4 eliminate up to 125 jobs and would force its 95 residents, many of whom are frail and sick, to
5 find a new place to live and lose treasured friendships; now, therefore be it

6 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
7 hereby honors Bannister House on its 125th Anniversary, and respectfully requests that Governor
8 Gina Raimondo convene a meeting amongst all stakeholders to find a way to keep Bannister
9 House open; and be it further

10 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and empowered to
11 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Honorable Gina Raimondo, Governor of
12 Rhode Island, and Orlando Bisbano, Administrator, Bannister House.

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