

**2016 -- H 7555**

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LC004773  
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**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND**

**IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2016**

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A N A C T

RELATING TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY -- RENAMING BRIDGE #550 LOCATED ON  
ROUTE 95 AND THE PAWTUCKET RIVER IN THE CITY OF PAWTUCKET

Introduced By: Representatives Johnston, Messier, Coughlin, Barros, and Tobon

Date Introduced: February 11, 2016

Referred To: House Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1           WHEREAS, The Honorable James E. Doyle has been a lifelong resident of the City of  
2 Pawtucket, giving back to his community as a social studies teacher at Pawtucket West High  
3 School (now called Shea High School) from 1960 until 1962, and in 1970, elected to the  
4 Pawtucket City Council, where he served for twenty-seven years, and was reelected thirteen  
5 times; and

6           WHEREAS, During his tenure on the Council, the Honorable James Doyle served as its  
7 President from 1982 to 1987, and also served on several committees, including the committees on  
8 beautification, city property, claims and pending suits, licenses, recreation, cemeteries, public  
9 works, reappointment, and finance; and

10           WHEREAS, From 1988 through 1998, the Honorable James Doyle chaired the Finance  
11 Committee, where he introduced and won passage of ordinances to protect the financial integrity  
12 of the municipal police and fire pension systems while saving taxpayers undue burden; and

13           WHEREAS, In 1997, the Honorable James Doyle became Mayor of the City of  
14 Pawtucket, calling for the "reawakening" of the city and restoring pride for Pawtucket residents.  
15 He is the city's longest consecutive serving mayor since its incorporation in April 1885, and to  
16 this day, his administration has had a lasting impact on the quality of life and the economic  
17 vitality of his beloved City of Pawtucket; and

18           WHEREAS, During the same year, Pawtucket like many older cities, contained almost

1 250 abandoned or blighted properties, but through Mayor Doyle's efforts in strengthening the  
2 City's Housing Court, as well as his creation of the city's interdepartmental property task force,  
3 today only 31 of those properties remain; and

4 WHEREAS, In 1999, Mayor Doyle created a 307-acre Arts & Entertainment District, the  
5 largest at that time. The District drew artists into the city, filled vacant and underutilized mills,  
6 viewed the artists as small businesses, and produced what would become one of Pawtucket's most  
7 successful economic development initiatives in recent times; and

8 WHEREAS, Mayor Doyle also spawned the Pawtucket Arts Festival in 1999, which,  
9 over the subsequent seventeen years, grew into the largest arts festival in New England and has  
10 brought tens of thousands of people into the city every September; and

11 WHEREAS, Mayor Doyle was also directly responsible for initiating the renovation  
12 of the city's mill buildings into residential use via the Riverfront Lofts project, with initial  
13 assistance from Pawtucket' Redevelopment Agency, which further enabled the development of  
14 the Bayley Lofts, Slater Cotton Mill, and The Lofts 125, all of which ultimately brought hundreds  
15 of new residents into the city. He also began planning that ultimately led to the development of  
16 the city's new Festival Pier and the new Conant Street Bridge; and

17 WHEREAS, In 2001, Mayor Doyle supported the creation of the Pawtucket Foundation  
18 which continues working closely to revitalize the city's economy, and in 2005, under his  
19 leadership, a major California developer revitalized Hope Artiste Village, a long vacant 650,000  
20 square-foot mill building. Today, this historic mill is filled to the brim with over 100 small  
21 businesses; and

22 WHEREAS, Also under Mayor Doyle's tenure, a state-of-the-art dog pound was built,  
23 along with a skateboard park, the McKinnon-Alves Soccer Complex, and the former Peerless  
24 building was developed into the city's Visitor Center which houses the Pawtucket Arts  
25 Collaborative Gallery, and the Department of Planning and Redevelopment, along with several  
26 other small businesses; and

27 WHEREAS, In addition, Mayor Doyle successfully oversaw the construction of the  
28 Pawtucket Water Supply Board's \$47.5 million state-of-the-art water treatment facility, that went  
29 online on March 19, 2008, a project that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency called "a  
30 model for the nation"; and

31 WHEREAS, Mayor Doyle's leadership led to both the Leon A. Mathieu Senior Center  
32 and the Pawtucket Police Department receiving national accreditation, vastly improving seniors'  
33 quality of life and public safety in the city, and his efforts to improve Slater Memorial Park led to  
34 Yankee Magazine declaring the park to be a "must see" landmark that countless generations

1 continue to enjoy; and

2 WHEREAS, Through Mayor Doyle's vision and efforts, GM donated its 7-acre parcel on  
3 the Blackstone River, valued at \$1.5 million, to the city for a \$1. Today that land, under the city's  
4 ownership, is being developed into commercial offices and residential apartments at an estimated  
5 cost of about \$45 million; and

6 WHEREAS, Mayor Doyle, in partnership with the Pawtucket Foundation, led the effort  
7 to develop a Commuter Rail Station in Pawtucket/Central Falls, funding the required local share  
8 for a Feasibility Study that concluded that a station would be successful in Pawtucket. RIDOT is  
9 now completing the engineering, environmental and design work for the project, thus allowing  
10 city officials to seek preliminary construction plans; and

11 WHEREAS, Mayor Doyle also enhanced the city's financial condition, earning  
12 Pawtucket its first "A" rating from Moody's Investment Service in over a decade; and

13 WHEREAS, Mayor Doyle successfully lobbied the Department of Transportation for  
14 design input culled from a Task Force of Pawtucket artisans, artists, and designers for a new  
15 bridge on Route 95 across the Pawtucket River. His initial efforts led to the construction of a new  
16 \$82 million iconic bridge that incorporates art deco design into its structure, reflecting the art  
17 deco elements of Pawtucket's City Hall and Tolman High School; and

18 WHEREAS, It is fitting that Mayor James E. Doyle's lifetime of selfless public service to  
19 the citizens of Pawtucket, and the lasting impact on the quality of life and economic vitality the  
20 City of Pawtucket be recognized.

21 SECTION 1. Chapter 22-7.4 of the General Laws entitled "Permanent Joint Committee  
22 on Naming All New Buildings, Bridges, Edifices and Other State Constructions" is hereby  
23 amended by adding thereto the following section:

24 **22-7.4-130. The Mayor James E. Doyle Bridge. --** [The bridge located on Route 95 and](#)  
25 [the Pawtucket River in the city of Pawtucket known as the Pawtucket River Bridge, #550, shall](#)  
26 [hereafter be named and known as "The Mayor James E. Doyle Pawtucket River Bridge" in honor](#)  
27 [of Mayor Doyle's lifetime commitment to the city of Pawtucket.](#)

28 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

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RELATING TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY -- RENAMING BRIDGE #550 LOCATED ON  
ROUTE 95 AND THE PAWTUCKET RIVER IN THE CITY OF PAWTUCKET

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- 1           This act would rename the Pawtucket River Bridge to "The Mayor James E. Doyle
- 2 Pawtucket River Bridge."
- 3           This act would take effect upon passage.

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