

2016 -- S 2979

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2016

SENATE RESOLUTION

CONGRATULATING ROBERT D. BILLINGTON ON BEING NAMED A 2016 "HERITAGE
HALL OF FAME" INDUCTEE

Introduced By: Senators Crowley, Conley, Doyle, and Nesselbush

Date Introduced: May 10, 2016

Referred To: Placed on the Senate Consent Calendar

1 WHEREAS, Founded in 1965, the Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame annually honors
2 those individuals whose contributions have enhanced the heritage of the State of Rhode Island.
3 Eligible members must be native Rhode Islanders or those who have adopted the Ocean State as
4 their permanent home; and

5 WHEREAS, One of this year's venerable inductees is Robert "Bob" Billington, founder
6 of the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council (BVTC), and a man who has spent the better part of
7 three decades contributing his time, energy and talents to creating "an epic vision for the Valley"
8 and to inspiring others to work together for the betterment of our state; and

9 WHEREAS, Bob earned his Bachelor's degree in management and marketing, his
10 Master's degree in Business Administration, and his Doctorate in Educational Leadership from
11 Johnson & Wales University; and

12 WHEREAS, In 1985, Mr. Billington founded the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council
13 where he has striven to incorporate the history, culture, nature, and commercial resources of the
14 nine cities and towns in the Blackstone Valley in order to create outstanding tourism "through
15 pride of place, education, development along the Blackstone River, community development, and
16 job creation." The Council was the first tourism agency in the world to be certified by the United
17 Nations World Tourism Organization; and

18 WHEREAS, During his tenure with the BVTC, Mr. Billington has spearheaded a panoply
19 of exciting and innovative projects. He oversaw construction of five riverboats, the Blackstone

1 Valley Explorer, two ferryboats, the Hope and the Renaissance, and an English canal boat Samuel
2 Slater. He also led the effort to create the Broad Street Regeneration Initiative, founded the
3 Sustainable Tourism Laboratory, from which Chocolate Mill Overlook Park in Central Falls was
4 built, and together with Tai-O, Inc., the Council assisted with the regeneration of the first
5 industrial road in the United States, planting over 200 cherry trees and lighting the first bridge on
6 the Blackstone; and

7 WHEREAS, In addition to serving as President and CEO of the BVTC, Mr. Billington is
8 also the founder of the Rhode Island State Council on the Humanities, an adjunct Professor at
9 Boston University, Bristol Community College, Johnson & Wales University, and Lasell College,
10 a Board Member of the Pawtucket Foundation, the Conductor of The Polar Express, Chair of the
11 Rhode Island Music Hall of Fame, and a member of the Board of Regents. He has also served as
12 a Commissioner with the Blackstone Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission and as past
13 Chairman of the Old Slater Mill Association; and

14 WHEREAS, Throughout the years, Mr. Billington's tireless efforts have earned him
15 countless recognitions and awards including the Tourism for Tomorrow Award, The Phoenix
16 Award, the prestigious Ulysses Prize from the United Nations World Tourism Organization, and
17 being named "Person of the Year" by the World Travel Awards; and

18 WHEREAS, Throughout his lifetime, Bob Billington has earned his reputation for
19 excellence and dedication to the Blackstone Valley. Being an inductee into the Rhode Island
20 Heritage Hall of Fame is a momentous tribute to this exceptional gentleman who is truly a role
21 model worthy of our recognition and emulation; now, therefore be it

22 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
23 hereby joins his multitude of friends and admirers in congratulating and honoring Bob Billington
24 on his induction into the Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame. We wish him good health, much
25 happiness, and continued success in all his future endeavors; and be it further

26 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
27 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Mr. Robert Billington.

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