

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2017

SENATE RESOLUTION

**EXTENDING CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF THE HONORABLE WILLIAM A.
WALASKA**

Introduced By: Senators McCaffrey, Lynch Prata, Ruggerio, Goodwin, and Algieri

Date Introduced: April 11, 2017

Referred To: Recommended for Immediate Consideration

1 WHEREAS, It is with profound sadness and regret that this Senate has learned of the
2 passing of our friend and former colleague, the Honorable William A. Walaska, a longtime
3 resident of the City of Warwick, a charismatic gentleman, and a well-respected former member of
4 the Rhode Island Senate; and

5 WHEREAS, Born and raised in the Smith Hill neighborhood of Providence, William
6 Walaska was a son of the late Chester and Celeste Walaska, and the brother of the late Henry
7 Walaska. He was the devoted husband of Marsha Walaska and the beloved father of William
8 Walaska, Jr., and his wife, Christine, Leslie Baxter and her husband, Robert, and Anne Marie
9 DeMello, and his son-in-law Dan DeMello. He was also the proud grandfather of Robert III,
10 Katherine, Grace, Daniel, Julia, William III, Ethan, and Michael; and

11 WHEREAS, William Walaska attended LaSalle Academy, and while earning his
12 Bachelor's degree in Economics from Providence College, he served our country in the United
13 States Navy Reserve. Continuing his education, he attended Williams College, School of
14 Commercial Banking, was a graduate of Amos Tuck, Dartmouth College, Graduate School of
15 Financial Management, and attained his Master's degree from Providence College; and

16 WHEREAS, A brilliant businessman with a granite work ethic, William Walaska began
17 working at an early age as a newspaper delivery boy on Smith Hill and evolved to become
18 President and C.E.O. of WAL Corp. DBA Werner, Sullivan & Nilsson Automotive. He had also
19 been a member and officer of various organizations which contribute their time and efforts to

1 making Rhode Island a better place to live including being a member of the American Legislative
2 Exchange Council, Economic Development Corporation, Economic Policy Council, the Warwick
3 Elks, the Fraternal Order of Elks, and the Knights of Columbus, and serving on the Board of the
4 Greenwood Credit Union, Bishop Hendricken High School, Potowomut Country Club,
5 Automotive Service Industry Association, Volunteers of Warwick Schools, Jonah Warwick
6 Advisory Board, House of Hope, and the Arthur J. Trudeau Center; and

7 WHEREAS, First elected to the Rhode Island Senate on November 8th of 1994, Senator
8 Walaska represented the people of Warwick in the 17th and subsequently, the 30th Senatorial
9 District, a position he held until 2016. Highly regarded among his peers, he was named President
10 Pro Tempore, and had most recently served as the Vice Chair of the Commerce Committee and as
11 a member of the Environment & Agriculture Committee; and

12 WHEREAS, During his twenty-two year tenure with the Senate, the Honorable William
13 Walaska fought for small businesses, clean energy, port development, and improving Rhode
14 Island's economy, and his personal plight helped to shed light on issues facing others with life-
15 threatening illnesses and led to the introduction of legislation requiring health insurance
16 companies to cover the use of "off-label" drugs to treat such chronic and disabling illnesses; and

17 WHEREAS, The Honorable William Walaska fought his cancer the same way he lived
18 his life, with humor, gusto, determination and courage. He was a remarkable man whose service,
19 boundless energy, magnanimous spirit, and omnipresent good humor in the face of adversity
20 represented all that is best in human nature and our State, and he will be dearly missed; now,
21 therefore, be it

22 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
23 hereby offers its sincere condolences on the passing of the Honorable William A. Walaska, a
24 distinguished advocate and public servant for the City of Warwick and the State of Rhode Island
25 for many, many years; 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 the Mrs. Marsha Walaska and Family.

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