

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2017

SENATE RESOLUTION

PROCLAIMING JUNE 10, 2017, AS THE "DAY OF PORTUGAL" IN THE STATE OF
RHODE ISLAND

Introduced By: Senators DaPonte, Satchell, Ruggerio, Felag, and Algieri

Date Introduced: June 08, 2017

Referred To: Recommended for Immediate Consideration

1 WHEREAS, June 10th marks the anniversary of the death of the revered Portuguese poet,
2 Luis Vaz Camoes, in 1580 who is best known for his epic poem "Os Lusíadas," a tribute to the
3 golden age of Portuguese maritime exploration and discoveries. The day is now celebrated around
4 the world in Portuguese-speaking communities as the "Day of Portugal, Camoes and the
5 Portuguese Communities"; and

6 WHEREAS, Rhode Island's large and significant Portuguese population has made
7 substantial contributions to all aspects of the state's history and rich cultural diversity; and

8 WHEREAS, Between 1830 and 1860, whaling ships from Bristol, Newport, New
9 Bedford, and Fall River traveled to the Azores where they often took on Portuguese sailors. Many
10 of these sailors traveled back to New England, settling in Providence, Pawtucket, and East
11 Providence. They frequently took on work in the textile mills, which were abundant in the area at
12 the time, while others became farmers in Little Compton and Portsmouth; and

13 WHEREAS, The main goal for the Portuguese people coming to Rhode Island and the
14 United States was economic betterment, but, like the Irish and Italians, the Portuguese people all
15 too often suffered discrimination and exploitation in employment. Through perseverance and an
16 indomitable work ethic, they carved a future for themselves, their families, and generations to
17 come; and

18 WHEREAS, Thousands sought refuge in Rhode Island in the mid-20th century to escape
19 the devastation of the Capelinhos volcano on the Azorean island of Faial, opening the door for

1 legal immigration for all Portuguese and many other ethnicities; and

2 WHEREAS, The number of Rhode Islanders who claim Portuguese ancestry is more than
3 10% of the state's population, the largest percentage of any state in the nation with the majority
4 making their homes in the Providence, Kent and Bristol Counties; and

5 WHEREAS, The 1st Congressional District of Rhode Island claims the highest
6 Portuguese population of any Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives; and

7 WHEREAS, The Portuguese American population in Rhode Island is an active and vital
8 part of our state. They have enriched and delighted our palates with fine restaurants that serve
9 traditional Portuguese dishes, and they actively contribute to and participate in all areas of the
10 community distinguishing themselves in leadership roles in such fields as the judiciary, law
11 enforcement, medicine, education, social services, entrepreneurship, civic engagement and
12 political participation; now, therefore be it

13 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
14 hereby thanks Rhode Island's Portuguese Community for the many contributions it has
15 generously made to the enrichment of this state; and be it further

16 RESOLVED, That this Senate hereby recognizes June 10, 2017, as the "Day of Portugal"
17 in the State of Rhode Island. We join in the celebration of the 40th consecutive celebration of this
18 auspicious occasion; and be it further

19 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
20 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Rhode Island "Day of Portugal" Committee,
21 and the Vice-Consulate of Portugal in Providence.

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