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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2020

SENATE RESOLUTION

EXPRESSING DEEPEST CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF UNITED STATES
SUPREME COURT JUSTICE, RUTH BADER GINSBURG

Introduced By: Senators Coyne, Euer, Ruggerio, McCaffrey, and Goodwin

Date Introduced: December 17, 2020

Referred To: Placed on the Senate Consent Calendar

1 WHEREAS, It is with deep sadness and regret that this nation has learned of the passing
2 of the Honorable Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, an iconic and beloved figure, and the second
3 woman to serve on the United States Supreme Court. She was the wife of the late Martin
4 Ginsburg and the mother of Jane Ginsburg and James Ginsburg; and

5 WHEREAS, Justice Ginsburg was born Joan Ruth Bader on March 15, 1933, in
6 Brooklyn, New York. She was the second daughter of Nathan Bader, an emigrant from Odessa,
7 Russian Empire, and Celia Bader, the daughter of immigrants from Krakow, Poland. As a baby,
8 she had lost her older sister Marilyn to meningitis; and

9 WHEREAS, As a young girl, Justice Ginsburg was an excellent student and a voracious
10 reader. She attended James Madison High School where she excelled in her studies. Her mother
11 was very involved in her education, frequently taking her to the library, and always encouraging
12 her to pursue knowledge. Tragically, she lost her mother to cancer shortly before graduating from
13 High School; and

14 WHEREAS, Justice Ginsburg attended Cornell University, graduating in 1954 with the
15 highest ranking of any female student in her class. While attending Cornell, she met her future
16 husband and life partner, and upon graduation, married Martin Ginsburg. Together they moved
17 to Fort Still Oklahoma, where he was serving on active duty with the United States Army. She
18 took a position with the Social Security Administration, but was later demoted after becoming
19 pregnant with her daughter, Jane; and

1 WHEREAS, In 1956, Justice Ginsburg enrolled at Harvard Law School, one of only nine
2 women in a class of 500. While at Harvard, the Dean of Students invited the female law students
3 to dinner and asked them why they were “taking the place of a man?” Justice Ginsburg later
4 transferred to Columbia Law School, where she tied for first in her class upon graduation; and

5 WHEREAS, Despite her superlative credentials, Justice Ginsburg had a very difficult
6 time securing a position after graduation due to continuing gender discrimination. Eventually, she
7 began a clerkship with Judge Edmund Palmieri, a Justice of the United States District Court for
8 the Southern District of New York. After finishing the two-year clerkship, she served as a
9 Research Associate and later as Associate Director of the Columbia Law School Project on
10 International Procedure, where her studies on gender equality in Sweden, a nation far more
11 advanced than the United States on those issues, greatly influenced her thoughts on how to
12 accomplish gender equality in the United States; and

13 WHEREAS, In 1963, Justice Ginsburg accepted a law position at Rutgers University,
14 where she was paid less than her male colleagues and was one of less than twenty female law
15 professors in the United States. In 1970, she co-founded the Women’s Rights Law Reporter, the
16 first law journal in the United States to focus exclusively on women’s rights. In 1972, she co-
17 founded the Women’s Rights Project at the ACLU and in 1973, became the General Counsel.
18 Under her direction and leadership, the Women’s Rights Project participated in more than 300
19 gender discrimination cases between 1973 and 1976, during which time she argued six cases
20 before the United States Supreme Court, winning five; and

21 WHEREAS, Justice Ginsburg was subsequently appointed by President Carter to serve
22 on the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, a position she held
23 until 1993 when she was appointed by President Clinton to the United States Supreme Court. She
24 was approved by the United States Senate with an overwhelmingly majority vote of 96 to 3.
25 While serving on the Supreme Court, she continued her fight for gender equality, and notably
26 wrote the 1996 majority opinion striking down the Virginia Military Institute’s male-only
27 admissions policy; and

28 WHEREAS, While Justice Ginsburg was seen as the leader of the so-called “liberal bloc”
29 on the United States Supreme Court, her collegial and friendly persona proved to be a vital
30 component that allowed an ideologically divided Supreme Court to continue to function in a
31 responsible manner. Many observers were often bemused to discover her close and congenial
32 friendship with Justice Scalia, a member of the conservative wing of the Supreme Court; and

33 WHEREAS, In her later years on the Supreme Court, Justice Ginsberg became a national
34 and international icon, as the very embodiment of progress and equality for women and

1 minorities across the globe. The nation was enthralled with her enormous intellect and her
2 humble and charming demeanor. She was also deeply respected for her courageous and tenacious
3 battles with both colon and pancreatic cancer. Mournfully, on September 18, 2020, Justice Ruth
4 Bader Ginsburg passed away due to complications from cancer and America lost one of its
5 greatest citizens and sagacious Justices; now, therefore be it

6 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island hereby expresses its deepest
7 condolences to the Ginsburg Family on the passing of the Honorable Supreme Court Justice Ruth
8 Bader Ginsburg; and be it further

9 RESOLVED That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
10 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to Jane Ginsburg and James Ginsburg.

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