

2022 -- H 7048

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2022

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

EXPRESSING DEEPEST CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF THE HONORABLE  
COLIN L. POWELL, FORMER UNITED STATES SECRETARY OF STATE AND UNITED  
STATES ARMY FOUR STAR GENERAL

Introduced By: Representatives Abney, Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Hull, Biah, Newberry,  
Filippi, Kennedy, Ruggiero, and Carson

Date Introduced: January 11, 2022

Referred To: House read and passed

1           WHEREAS, In 1937, the Honorable Colin Powell was born in Harlem, New York City,  
2 and raised in the South Bronx by his parents Luther and Maud Powell, who had immigrated to the  
3 United States from Jamaica. He attended New York City public schools and graduated from the  
4 City College of New York, attaining a Bachelor's degree in geology. He took part in ROTC in  
5 college and was commissioned as a United States Army second lieutenant in 1958, and would  
6 proceed to serve our nation with honor, distinction, and valor as a professional soldier; and

7           WHEREAS, After receiving his military commission, General Powell received advanced  
8 training in Georgia, during which time he was refused service in bars and restaurants because he  
9 was African-American. After completing his basic training at Fort Benning, he was assigned to  
10 serve as platoon leader to the 48th infantry in West Germany; and

11           WHEREAS, General Powell served two tours of duty in Vietnam. During his first tour in  
12 1962-63, he served as a South Vietnamese Army advisor and injured his foot while on patrol in a  
13 Viet Cong held area when he stepped on a punji stake. In 1968, he returned to Vietnam with the  
14 rank of Major and served as the Assistant Chief of Staff of operations for the 23rd American  
15 Infantry Division. He was decorated with the Soldier's Medal for bravery after surviving a  
16 helicopter crash and, despite his injuries, he rescued three others from the burning wreckage; and

17           WHEREAS, After returning from the Vietnam War in 1971, General Powell earned a  
18 Master of Business Administration degree from Georgetown University. He later completed a  
19 White House Fellowship from 1972 to 1973, and attended the National War College from 1975 to

1 1976. From 1976 to 1977, he commanded the 2nd Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division; and

2 WHEREAS, In the early 1980s, General Powell served as a Senior Military Assistant to  
3 President Reagan's Secretary of Defense. In 1986, he was named Commander of V Corps in West  
4 Germany and in 1987, he served as the United States Deputy National Security Advisor, and from  
5 1987 to 1989, he served as President Reagan's National Security Advisor; and

6 WHEREAS, General Powell was promoted to four-star General in April of 1989, and  
7 served for a period of time as the Commander in Chief of the Forces Command (FORSCOM)  
8 which oversees all Army, Army Reserves and National Guard units in the United States. Later in  
9 1989, General Powell, at the age of 52, became the youngest officer to serve as the Chairman of  
10 the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the highest position in the Department of Defense. He oversaw United  
11 States responses to 28 crises during his time as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and was  
12 given the nickname of the "Reluctant Warrior" for his preference for diplomacy and containment  
13 instead of military intervention, when possible; and

14 WHEREAS, General Powell retired from the United States Army in 1993, and returned  
15 to public service in 2001, when he was appointed by President George W. Bush to serve as  
16 Secretary of State. He was unanimously confirmed by the United States Senate, and became the  
17 first African-American Secretary of State in United States history. He went on to play a critical  
18 role in managing our nation's relationships with other nations in the wake of the September 11,  
19 2001 terrorist attacks. His moderate, eloquent and seasoned voice of reason and experience  
20 became widely respected and admired across the globe. He resigned on November 15, 2004; and

21 WHEREAS, General Powell received numerous awards during his distinguished military  
22 and public service career including two Presidential Medals of Freedom (the second with  
23 distinction), the Secretary of State Distinguished Service Medal, the Secretary of Energy  
24 Distinguished Service Medal, the Ronald Reagan Freedom Award, the Spingarn Medal from the  
25 NAACP, the United States Senator John Heinz Award for Greatest Public Service by an elected  
26 or appointed official, the Congressional Gold Medal, the Silver Buffalo Award, the highest adult  
27 award given by the Boy Scouts of America, and many other prestigious honors; and

28 WHEREAS, General Powell was the beloved husband of Alma (Johnson) Powell for  
29 more than fifty-nine years, and the proud father of Michael Powell, who served as the Chairman  
30 of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), Linda Powell, and Annamarie Powell; now,  
31 therefore be it

32 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island hereby  
33 extends its deepest sympathies to the Powell family on the passing of the Honorable General  
34 Colin Powell. We furthermore commemorate his brave and loyal service to our nation; and be it

1 further

2 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to  
3 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to Mrs. Alma Powell, the Honorable Michael  
4 Powell, Linda Powell, and Annemarie Powell.

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