

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2023

SENATE RESOLUTION

EXPRESSING DEEPEST CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF HELEN M. WILKERSON

Introduced By: Senators Ruggiero, and Felag

Date Introduced: January 18, 2023

Referred To: Recommended for Immediate Consideration

1 WHEREAS, It is with deep sadness that this Senate has learned of the passing of Helen
2 M. Wilkerson of South Dennis, Massachusetts. She was born in Brooklyn, New York, a daughter
3 of William and Helen Toner, and was a graduate of Cathedral High School in Springfield,
4 Massachusetts; and

5 WHEREAS, Ms. Wilkerson lived in Texas and Indiana for 27 years, and strived tirelessly
6 to provide for her family and loved ones. For more than 35 years, she worked for the Town of
7 Dennis in numerous capacities, including serving as a transfer station gatekeeper, town hall
8 receptionist, police matron, and election worker; and

9 WHEREAS, In recognition of Ms. Wilkerson's longtime role as gatekeeper, she was
10 awarded, by public vote, the Cape Cod Register's Town Employee of the Year Award many
11 times. She also served on the Charles E. Chamberlain Jr. Parkway Study Committee, the
12 Insurance Advisory Committee, and the Conservation Land Trust; and

13 WHEREAS, Ms. Wilkerson was a longtime supporter of law enforcement and first
14 responders. In addition to working as a matron for the Dennis Police Department and the Town of
15 Yarmouth, she also volunteered as a member of the Dennis Police Citizen's Police Academy, and
16 as a Barnstable County Deputy Sheriff. In recognition of her many years of assisting the Dennis
17 Fire Department, she was selected to read the Fireman's Prayer for the new Route 28 fire station
18 dedication. She was most proud of her work with first responders assisting members of the Fire
19 Department in hosting families of the fallen 9/11 firefighters on annual Cape Cod vacations; and

20 WHEREAS, Ms. Wilkerson was a passionate and extremely knowledgeable sports fan.

1 Her early love of sports began in the 1940s and 1950s when she would listen to boxing matches
2 on the radio with her father. Her passion for sports soon expanded to include baseball and
3 football. She was a lifetime Dodgers fan and throughout the years would attend many of their
4 spring training games in Vero Beach, Florida, and regular season games at Dodgers Stadium in
5 Los Angeles. A highlight of her life occurred in 2020 when she attended the 2020 World Series
6 with her son, Timothy. She also was a huge New York Giant football fan and enjoyed wearing Eli
7 Manning’s jersey around Cape Cod; and

8 WHEREAS, Ms. Wilkerson was a devoted mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and
9 friend who was beloved by all who knew her. She was a selfless, giving person with a wonderful
10 sense of humor, and immensely proud of her Irish heritage; and

11 WHEREAS, Ms. Wilkerson leaves behind her children, Janet Thelan and her husband,
12 Keith, David Wilkerson and his wife, Trayce, and Timothy Wilkerson. She also leaves behind her
13 sister, MaryAnne Wright, her brother, William Toner and his wife, Caroline, three
14 granddaughters, six great-grandchildren, many nieces and nephews, and several cousins; now,
15 therefore be it

16 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island hereby expresses its deepest
17 condolences to the Wilkerson Family on the passing of Helen M. Wilkerson; and be it further

18 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
19 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to Janet Thelan, David Wilkerson and Timothy
20 Wilkerson.

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