

2025 -- H 5004

LC000037

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

HOUSE RESOLUTION

EXPRESSING DEEPEST CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF THE MOST REVEREND
LOUIS E. GELINEAU, D.D., J.C.L., S.T.L., BISHOP EMERITUS OF PROVIDENCE

Introduced By: Representatives Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Corvese, Shallcross Smith,
Fogarty, Hull, Finkelman, Diaz, Bennett, and Fellela

Date Introduced: January 09, 2025

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, It is with profound sadness that this House has learned of the passing of the
2 Most Reverend Louis E. Gelineau, Bishop Emeritus of Providence on November 7, 2024. Bishop
3 Gelineau was the sixth Bishop of Providence and the second longest-serving bishop in diocesan
4 history; and

5 WHEREAS, Louis Edward Gelineau was born on May 3, 1928 in Burlington, Vermont, a
6 son of the late Leon and Juliette Gelineau. He received his early education at St. Joseph's
7 Elementary and Cathedral High School in Burlington. Louis Gelineau went on to earn a
8 Licentiate in Sacred Theology and a Bachelor of Philosophy degree from St. Paul's University in
9 Ottawa, Canada and later a Licentiate in Canon Law from the Catholic University of America in
10 1959; and

11 WHEREAS, Louis Gelineau was ordained to the Priesthood in the Diocese of Burlington
12 by Bishop Edward Ryan on June 5, 1954 and served as an associate pastor at All Saints Parish
13 and St. Stephen's Parish. Later, he served the Burlington diocese as Assistant Chancellor,
14 Director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, and Secretary and Master of Ceremonies
15 to Bishop Robert Joyce. In 1961, he became Chancellor and in 1968 he became Vicar General
16 and was elevated by the Vatican to Prelate of His Holiness; and

17 WHEREAS, On December 6, 1971, Pope Paul VI appointed Monsignor Gelineau the 6th
18 Bishop of Providence and on January 26, 1972, he received his episcopal consecration from
19 Bishop Joyce at the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul in Providence; and

1 WHEREAS, In 1973, acting upon the recommendation of the Second Vatican Council to
2 restore the permanent diaconate, Bishop Gelineau established a formation program to accomplish
3 that, and three years later he ordained the first permanent deacons in the diocese. Also in the
4 1970s, he traveled to Haiti leading to the creation of the Providence-Haiti Outreach project and
5 the creation of a two-room school serving 50 children which has grown to serving 350 children
6 annually; and

7 WHEREAS, Bishop Gelineau placed a great emphasis on the pastoral aspect of his
8 office, believing he should spend as much time as possible engaging with the faith community.
9 Bishop Gelineau created the vicariate administration structure with the diocese, still in use today,
10 freeing him to spend more time travelling around the diocese to meet the people of his flock. In
11 1995, he launched a highly successful, three-year, \$40 million-dollar capital campaign to provide
12 financial support for parishes, ministries and projects throughout the diocese. As part of his
13 constant effort to reach out to the faithful, Bishop Gelineau hosted a television show taking its
14 name from his episcopal motto “Rejoice in Hope” and had a weekly column “Ask the Bishop” in
15 the Providence Visitor (now The Rhode Island Catholic). Because of his strong belief in outreach
16 to the faithful, he was dubbed “The People’s Bishop”; and

17 WHEREAS, On June 11, 1997, after more than 25 years of faithful service to the Diocese
18 of Providence, Pope John Paul II accepted Bishop Gelineau’s retirement. Though retired, Bishop
19 Emeritus Gelineau continued to serve the Catholic community of Rhode Island in various ways.
20 In 2017, Bishop Thomas Tobin presented Bishop Gelineau with the Lumen Gentium award in
21 recognition of his great contributions in the areas of administration and stewardship in the
22 diocese; and

23 WHEREAS, It is certain that Bishop Louis Gelineau left an indelible mark upon the
24 Diocese of Providence and that “The People’s Bishop” will long be remembered by the people of
25 Rhode Island as a devoted steward of the diocese entrusted to him, and a faithful shepherd of his
26 flock; now therefore be it

27 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island hereby
28 expresses its deepest condolences on the passing of the Most Reverend Louis E. Gelineau, Bishop
29 Emeritus of Providence; and be it further

30 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
31 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to the Diocese of Providence.

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