

2025 -- H 5208

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

HOUSE RESOLUTION

HONORING GEORGE NEE ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT AS PRESIDENT
OF THE RHODE AFL-CIO

Introduced By: Representatives Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Corvese, Chippendale,
Speakman, Serpa, Spears, Donovan, Ajello, and Fellela

Date Introduced: January 28, 2025

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, George Nee, widely regarded as the “face of labor” in the State of Rhode
2 Island, is retiring after four decades advocating for the rights and livelihood of our State’s
3 workers with the Rhode Island AFL-CIO; and

4 WHEREAS, In the late 1960s, at the age of 21, Mr. Nee quit college to help coordinate
5 Boston’s grape boycott, soon followed by leading a lettuce boycott in 1971. Often sleeping on
6 office floors and in abandoned buildings, he worked to organize members of various local labor
7 movements, led marches, and grew his knowledge and convictions, serving as the driver and
8 bodyguard for Cesar Chavez, whom he later joined on a 40-day pilgrimage across southern
9 California to help organize farm workers; and

10 WHEREAS, In 1976, Mr. Nee initiated an independent union of clerical workers,
11 healthcare workers and jewelry workers, which eventually rose to encompass more than 1,500
12 members and after merging with another union, established what is today known as the Service
13 Employees International Union, Local 1199; and

14 WHEREAS, In 1983, Mr. Nee began as a staff representative for the AFL-CIO and soon
15 thereafter, became the Union’s Executive Director in 1985. In 1991, he was elected as Secretary-
16 Treasurer, and in 2009, he was ultimately elected President, a position he has held for the past 15
17 years and which is widely considered one of the most powerful political positions in Rhode
18 Island; and

19 WHEREAS, Over the course of his tenure at the helm of the AFL-CIO, Mr. Nee has built

1 the currently 80,000-member union into “a force for economic and social justice for all the
2 workers” with a vision and belief that organized labor has the “right and responsibility” to
3 vigorously lobby and have a voice in every level of the government’s decisions; and

4 WHEREAS, The Union encourages members to hold elected leaders accountable,
5 endorses candidates based on labor issues, mobilizes voter registration efforts, and supports and
6 promotes members' efforts to both run and assist in campaigns for political office at both the City
7 and State levels; and

8 WHEREAS, Earning the respect and gratitude of Rhode Island’s leaders throughout his
9 career, Mr. Nee has earned a reputation as “a man of great character and principal” and leaves a
10 legacy as “an extremely effective advocate” who, when he “won a victory, it wasn’t just for the
11 AFL-CIO, it was for all working Rhode Islanders”; now, therefore be it

12 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island hereby
13 recognizes George Nee on the occasion of his retirement as President of the Rhode Island AFL-
14 CIO, and thanks and acknowledges him for the enormous contributions he has made in improving
15 the lives of the people in our State. We furthermore wish him the very best of health and
16 happiness in the years to come; and be it further

17 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
18 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Mr. George Nee.

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