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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

HOUSE RESOLUTION

EXPRESSING DEEPEST CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF POPE FRANCIS

Introduced By: Representatives Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Chippendale, Azzinaro,
Costantino, Corvese, Edwards, O'Brien, Ajello, and Fellela
Date Introduced: April 24, 2025

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, It is with deep sadness that this House of Representatives of the State of
2 Rhode Island has learned of the passing of Pope Francis, a man of great love and compassion for
3 all, especially those living on the margins of humanity. Pope Francis was a great man who served
4 the Catholic Church and all of humanity with unwavering passion, humility and grace as Pope
5 from March 13, 2013 to April 21, 2025; and

6 WHEREAS, Pope Francis was born as Jorge Mario Bergoglio in Buenos Aires,
7 Argentina, the eldest of five children to Mario José Bergoglio and Maria Sivori. Pope Francis
8 graduated from the technical secondary school Escuela Técnica Industrial N° 27, Hipólito
9 Yrigoyen, where he received a chemical technician's diploma. Pope Francis then proceeded to
10 work for several years at the HICKETHIER-BACHMANN Laboratory. Prior to holding this position, he
11 had worked as a bouncer and a janitor; and

12 WHEREAS, Pope Francis was inspired to become a Jesuit Priest in 1958 after recovering
13 from life-threatening pneumonia. He had developed three cysts and had to have part of his lung
14 removed. He began his studies at the Archdiocesan Seminary in Buenos Aires, and after three
15 years, he entered the Society of Jesus as a novice. He continued his studies in Santiago, Chile,
16 and officially became a Jesuit in 1960, taking his initial, perpetual vows of poverty, chastity and
17 obedience; and

18 WHEREAS, In 1960, Pope Francis obtained a licentiate in philosophy from the Colegio
19 Máximo de San José. He then taught literature at a Catholic High School in Santa Fe, Argentina,
20 and at a College in Buenos Aires. Pope Francis began his theological studies at Facultades de

1 Filosofía y Teología de San Miguel. On December 13, 1969, Pope Francis was ordained by
2 Archbishop Ramón José Castellano. From 1969 to 1992, Pope Francis's duties included serving
3 as the Master of Novices for the Province, teaching as a professor of theology, and served as the
4 Provincial Superior of the Society of Jesus in Argentina for six years; and

5 WHEREAS, In 1992, Pope Francis was selected to serve as the Auxiliary Bishop of
6 Buenos Aires and was consecrated as the Titular Bishop of Auca, where he chose as his
7 Episcopal Motto, from Saint Bede's homily on Matthew, "Because he saw him through the eyes
8 of mercy and chose him"; and

9 WHEREAS, In 1997, Pope Francis was appointed to serve as the Coadjutor Archbishop
10 of Buenos Aires and was named the Metropolitan Archbishop in 1998. Among his many major
11 reform initiatives was his plan to increase the presence of the church in the villa miseria, or slums
12 of Buenos Aires. Under his leadership, the number of priests assigned to work in these areas
13 doubled, and Pope Francis visited these impoverished areas himself. His unyielding concern and
14 compassion for the least of them earned him the nickname, the "slum bishop". He was also
15 known for his regularly celebrating the Holy Thursday foot-washing ritual in jails, hospitals,
16 retirement homes and slums, and for his opposition to the military dictatorship in Argentina in the
17 1970s; and

18 WHEREAS, In 2001, Pope Francis was appointed to the position of Cardinal by Pope
19 John Paul II. As a Cardinal, Pope Francis developed a reputation for a deep commitment to social
20 justice and for his personal humility. He maintained a simple lifestyle which included living in a
21 small apartment, using public transportation, cooking his own meals and spending most of his
22 time in Argentina as opposed to Rome; and

23 WHEREAS, Pope Francis was elected Pope on March 13, 2013, and became both the
24 first Jesuit Pope and the first Pope from the Americas and the Southern Hemisphere. Pope Francis
25 was known for his less formal style while serving as Pope. On the night of his election, he took
26 the bus back to the hotel with the Cardinals rather than being driven in the Papal car, and the very
27 next day he visited an ill Cardinal in the hospital and chatted with patients and hospital staff. He
28 also chose not to live in the official Papal residence, but rather in the Domus Sanctae Marthae
29 guest house; and

30 WHEREAS, Pope Francis was regularly praised for his great accessibility to people and
31 for having a great common touch and ability to communicate effectively with people, which
32 included his ability to speak fluent Spanish, Italian and German, and being conversant in French,
33 Portuguese, Latin, and English; and

34 WHEREAS, One of his first acts as Pope occurred on Holy Thursday when he chose to

1 wash the feet of ten male and two female juvenile prisoners, two of which were Muslim. This
2 ceremony was the first time that a Pope had included women in this ritual. As Pope, Francis
3 repeatedly spoke in favor of protecting the environment, assisting and protecting the poor and the
4 least amongst us, and urged nations to pursue peace and avoid conflict. Pope Francis also
5 prioritized ecumenism and interreligious dialogue, opposed abortion and the death penalty,
6 denounced the criminalization of homosexuality and increased the Catholic Church's outreach to
7 the LGBTQ community; and

8 WHEREAS, Pope Francis received much praise and many accolades across a global
9 spectrum in support of his papacy, which included being named the "Person of the Year" by Time
10 Magazine in 2013, and named by Fortune Magazine as number one on its list of the world's 50
11 greatest leaders. A street in La Plata, Argentina was named after him, and he was the first Pope to
12 create an Instagram account. The creation of his Instagram account was widely successful,
13 breaking records when it gained over one million followers in under 12 hours of the account
14 being created. On November 26, 2020, Pope Francis became the first Pope to write an op-ed for
15 the New York Times; now, therefore be it

16 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island hereby
17 expresses its deepest condolences on the passing of Pope Francis; and be it further

18 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
19 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to the Roman Catholic Diocese of Providence and
20 the Vatican.

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