

2026 -- H 8596

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

HOUSE RESOLUTION

THANKING AND COMMEMORATING THE GROUNDSKEEPERS AND MAINTENANCE
STAFF OF THE RHODE ISLAND VETERANS MEMORIAL CEMETERY IN EXETER

Introduced By: Representatives Fascia, Hopkins, Messier, Furtado, Santucci, Nardone,
Edwards, Place, Ajello, and Fogarty

Date Introduced: May 28, 2026

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, The Rhode Island Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Exeter, Rhode Island,
2 serves as a sacred and final resting place for more than 30,000 veterans and their eligible family
3 members, providing a dignified and honorable setting that reflects the respect and gratitude of the
4 people of Rhode Island; and

5 WHEREAS, The dedicated groundskeepers, cemetery specialists, and maintenance staff
6 perform the essential and solemn work of maintaining the cemetery's 280 acres, ensuring that the
7 grounds remain pristine, the gravesites are properly cared for, and the hallowed space continues
8 to honor those who served our nation; and

9 WHEREAS, These professionals handle not only routine grounds maintenance but also
10 support committal services, often performing their duties with deep respect and personal
11 connection to the veteran community; and

12 WHEREAS, Many members of the cemetery staff, including leadership such as
13 Administrator James Bessel, a retired U.S. Air Force Lieutenant Colonel, are themselves veterans
14 who bring a profound sense of duty and understanding to their roles; and

15 WHEREAS, The staff at the Rhode Island Veterans Memorial Cemetery are paid state
16 employees under the Rhode Island Office of Veterans Services, demonstrating the state's
17 commitment to professional stewardship of this important site; and

18 WHEREAS, Through their consistent excellence and reverence in caring for these
19 hallowed grounds, the groundskeepers and maintenance team uphold the highest standards of

1 honor for Rhode Island’s veterans and their families; now, therefore be it

2 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island hereby
3 extends its deepest gratitude and appreciation to the groundskeepers, cemetery specialists,
4 maintenance staff, and all employees of the Rhode Island Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Exeter
5 for their dedicated service; and be it further

6 RESOLVED, That the Rhode Island House of Representatives commemorates and
7 honors their important contributions to preserving the dignity and beauty of this sacred resting
8 place for Rhode Island’s veterans; and be it further

9 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
10 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Rhode Island Office of Veterans Services,
11 the Administrator of the Rhode Island Veterans Memorial Cemetery, and the dedicated grounds
12 and maintenance staff in recognition of their outstanding service.

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