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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

SENATE RESOLUTION

EXPRESSING DEEPEST CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF THE HONORABLE
DOMINICK J. RUGGERIO, PRESIDENT AND DEAN OF THE RHODE ISLAND SENATE

Introduced By: Senators Lawson, Ciccone, Tikoian, Bissaillon, Gallo, Sosnowski,
DiPalma, Felag, LaMountain, and de la Cruz
Date Introduced: April 30, 2025

Referred To: Recommended for Immediate Consideration

1 WHEREAS, It is with deepest sorrow that this Senate has learned of the passing of our
2 colleague and valued friend, the Honorable Dominick Ruggerio, the greatly respected President
3 of the Rhode Island Senate from 2017 until his passing; and
4 WHEREAS, "Donny," as he was known to family, friends and colleagues at the State
5 House, grew up in the Fruit Hill neighborhood of North Providence. He was a graduate of La
6 Salle Academy, attended Bryant College, and earned his Bachelor of Science degree from
7 Providence College. Over the next five years, he worked as a policy aide to Lt. Gov. Thomas
8 DiLuglio, and in 1985, began a decades-long career with the Laborers' International Union of
9 North America and in 2005, became an administrator for the New England Laborers' Labor-
10 Management Cooperation Trust; and
11 WHEREAS, President Ruggerio was elected to the Rhode Island House of
12 Representatives, where he served from 1981, until being elected to the Rhode Island Senate in
13 November of 1984, representing the people in District 4, which includes North Providence and
14 neighborhoods in Providence. During his early years in the Senate, he was a member and Vice
15 Chairman of the Senate Labor Committee, a member of the Senate Finance Committee, the
16 Senate Rules Committee, and the Joint Committee on Accounts and Claims; and
17 WHEREAS, During his initial years in the Senate, President Ruggerio became a leader in
18 efforts to allow the Narragansett Indian Tribe to build a casino in Providence, and furthered his
19 efforts in the State's gaming industry with the request for a study commission on state-run sports

1 betting. He also championed job creation and retention through the development of land being
2 made available in downtown Providence from the relocation of Interstate 195, and helped to
3 create a new \$50,000 tangible personal property tax exemption; and

4 WHEREAS, Earning the respect of his colleagues in the Senate, President Ruggerio was
5 named Majority Whip, a position he held from 2003 through 2010, was elected Majority Leader
6 in November of 2010, and in March of 2017, was elected by the Senate membership to be the
7 Senate President, a position he held until his passing, and during which time, also earned him the
8 distinction of being Dean, the longest-serving, member of the Senate; and

9 WHEREAS, With fairness, a quick wit, and the innate knowledge of what the
10 membership wanted, and what our State needed, President Ruggerio led the Senate during the
11 passage of landmark legislation including, the passage of the 2021 Act on Climate, after which he
12 sponsored the most aggressive energy standard with legislation requiring 100 percent of the
13 State's electricity be offset by renewable energy by 2033. He also championed legislation on the
14 legalization of sports betting, and successfully pushed the legislature to authorize remote iGaming
15 in 2023. In addition, he sponsored legislation to make the Rhode Island Promise program
16 permanent, led the State's efforts to address lead poisoning by replacing all lead pipes in Rhode
17 Island's water supply, championed the Plastic Waste Reduction Act to reduce single-use plastic
18 bags, and laws to institute a recycling program for mercury used in automobiles, as well as
19 improve collection and disposal rules for mercury thermostats, and legislation creating the state's
20 mattress recycling program, to name but a few of the areas of life he helped to make Rhode Island
21 safer for generations to come; and

22 WHEREAS, In addition to a lifetime spent dedicated to the people of Rhode Island,
23 President Ruggerio was devoted to his family including, being the proud father of his son,
24 Charles Ruggerio and his wife, Jillian, his beautiful daughter, Amanda Fallon and her husband,
25 PJ, his effervescent sister, Lisa Aceto, and the loves of his life, his four grandchildren, Ava and
26 Mia Ruggerio and Natalie and Jameson Fallon; and

27 WHEREAS, Always active and devoted to the local community and his Italian roots,
28 President Ruggerio served on the Board of Directors of the Wanskuck Library, and as a member
29 of the Sons of Italy, Loggia Vittoria and the DaVinci Center Development Committee; and

30 WHEREAS, Throughout his long and distinguished career, President Ruggerio was
31 honored with a panoply of awards for his leadership and initiatives including, The Humane
32 Society of the United States' Humane Legislator Award in recognition of his efforts to prohibit
33 double-decker horse trailers, the Mattress Recycling Council's Environmental Stewardship
34 Award, the Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce's Barbara Burlingame Award, and the

1 Clean Water Association's Legislator of the Year award; and

2 WHEREAS, The legacy of this remarkable gentleman, whose knowledge and leadership
3 during his decades of service in public office, and whose support for working people, the
4 environment and the betterment of this State, is and will continue to be felt and be beneficial to
5 every Rhode Islander for generations to come; now, therefore be it

6 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island hereby expresses deepest
7 sympathy and heartfelt condolences to his bereaved family and friends on the passing of the
8 Honorable Dominick J. Ruggerio, President of the Rhode Island Senate; 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 Charles Ruggerio and Family, Amanda Fallon
11 and Family, and Lisa Aceto and Family.

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