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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

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SENATE RESOLUTION

EXPRESSING DEEPEST CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF THE HONORABLE  
JAMES M. DONELAN, ESQ.

Introduced By: Senators LaMountain, Britto, Murray, Appollonio, Felag, Burke, Rogers,  
McKenney, Vargas, and Acosta

Date Introduced: March 12, 2026

Referred To: Recommended for Immediate Consideration

1           WHEREAS, It is with deep sadness that this Senate has learned of the passing of the  
2 Honorable James M. Donelan, Esq., of Warwick. He was the beloved husband of Akane Shirai;  
3 and

4           WHEREAS, Mr. Donelan was born in Warwick, the son of the late George and Viorine  
5 Donelan. He was a graduate of Pilgrim High School, and the University of Rhode Island. He then  
6 attended and graduated from the New England School of Law in Boston, Massachusetts; and

7           WHEREAS, Mr. Donelan operated his own law practice in Warwick for many years,  
8 always offering his clients wise counsel and serving them with passion and abiding integrity; and

9           WHEREAS, Mr. Donelan also had a very successful public service career. He served the  
10 people living in the north end of Warwick with distinction representing the 15th District of the  
11 Rhode Island State Senate for fourteen years, from his election in 1990 to December 31, 2002. As  
12 a State Senator, he served as a distinguished member of the Judiciary and Labor Committees, and  
13 wrote and sponsored Rhode Island's Good Driving Statute, allowing drivers with a clean record  
14 for three years to have a new, minor moving violation dismissed; and

15           WHEREAS, In his free time, Mr. Donelan was a passionate boater who greatly enjoyed  
16 his trips to Newport and Block Island for the annual Fourth of July celebration, usually  
17 accompanied by one of his precious Golden Retrievers, KJ or Sushi. He and his wife, Akane,  
18 shared a love of travel, especially cruising, and together they explored much of the world. Mr.  
19 Donelan was known and admired for his generosity and integrity, and he was deeply respected by

1 the countless people and organizations he supported throughout his life; and

2 WHEREAS, In addition to his wife, Akane, Mr. Donelan leaves behind his sister, Carol  
3 Paquette, and his stepson, Kent Shirai; now, therefore be it

4 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island hereby expresses its deepest  
5 condolences to the family and friends of the Honorable James M. Donelan, Esq.; and be it further

6 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to  
7 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the family of the Honorable James M. Donelan,  
8 Esq.

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