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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

SENATE RESOLUTION

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF THE LATE SENATE PRESIDENT DOMINICK J. RUGGERIO AND COMMEMORATING THE NAMING OF THE RHODE ISLAND SENATE CHAMBER IN HIS HONOR

Introduced By: Senators Lawson, Ciccone, Tikoian, Gallo, Bissailon, Sosnowski,
Murray, DiPalma, LaMountain, and Burke

Date Introduced: March 19, 2026

Referred To: Recommended for Immediate Consideration

1 WHEREAS, The Honorable Dominick J. Ruggiero, affectionately known to many as
2 “Donny,” devoted more than four decades of his life to public service in the State of Rhode Island
3 and leaves behind a legacy of leadership, dedication, and commitment to the people he served;
4 and

5 WHEREAS, Born and raised in North Providence, he was the son of Mario “Charlie”
6 Ruggiero and Dorothy (Prush) Ruggiero, and from an early age embraced the values of hard
7 work, loyalty, and community; and

8 WHEREAS, A graduate of La Salle Academy and Providence College, he began his
9 career as an aide to Lieutenant Governor Thomas DiLuglio, later working for the Rhode Island
10 Public Transit Authority before taking over his family’s restaurant, The Chalet, in North
11 Providence. Donny soon returned to his labor roots, joining the Laborers’ International Union 271
12 as a Field Representative and Organizer, eventually becoming Administrator of the New England
13 Laborers’ Labor-Management Cooperation Trust; and

14 WHEREAS, His career in public service began in the Rhode Island House of
15 Representatives in 1980, and in 1984 he was elected to the Rhode Island Senate representing
16 District 4, beginning a forty-year tenure during which he became the longest-serving member of
17 the Senate and earned the affectionate title of “Dean” of the Senate; and

18 WHEREAS, During his distinguished legislative career, he served as vice chairman of
19 the Senate Labor Committee, Senate Majority Whip, Deputy Majority Leader, Majority Leader,

1 and in 2017 was elected by his colleagues to serve as President of the Senate; and

2 WHEREAS, As Senate President, he led with an open-door policy and a deep respect for
3 the institution, working tirelessly on behalf of working families, supporting economic
4 development, advancing educational opportunity, protecting employee pensions, raising the
5 state’s minimum wage, and promoting environmental stewardship and animal welfare; and

6 WHEREAS, Donny was caring and generous beyond measure, and was widely respected
7 for his steady leadership, institutional knowledge, willingness to listen, and ability to bring people
8 together through public service. A true statesman, he listened to every point of view and
9 respected every individual, regardless of whether they held a differing viewpoint. He worked
10 consistently to find common ground among his peers, even on the most challenging and
11 contentious issues. As a valued mentor to countless colleagues, and a consistent champion for his
12 constituents, he set an example for all public servants; and

13 WHEREAS, In his personal life, he was a devoted husband, father, and grandfather who
14 cherished spending time with his family, including his children, Charles Ruggerio and his wife,
15 Jillian, and Amanda Fallon and her husband, PJ; his four beloved grandchildren, Ava Ruggerio,
16 Mia Ruggerio, Natalie Fallon, and Jameson Fallon; his sister and his best friend, Lisa Aceto, and
17 her husband, James; and his nieces and nephew, Christine DeSimone, Justine Mello, and Anthony
18 Aceto. He was preceded in death by his beloved brother Charles “Chucky” Ruggerio; and

19 WHEREAS, Donny deeply treasured time spent gathered with family for home-cooked
20 meals on Sundays and holidays, and he enjoyed annual trips to the Saratoga Race Course and
21 beating odds makers of all types; and

22 WHEREAS, His passing marks the loss of a dedicated public servant, a trusted colleague,
23 and a friend to many within this Chamber and across the state; and

24 WHEREAS, In recognition of his extraordinary service and enduring impact upon the
25 Rhode Island Senate, the Senate Chamber shall be named in his honor as a lasting tribute to his
26 leadership and devotion to the people of Rhode Island; now, therefore be it

27 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island hereby honors the life,
28 service, and memory of the late Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio; and be it further

29 RESOLVED, That the members of the Senate express their deepest sympathy to his
30 family and loved ones; and be it further

31 RESOLVED, That the naming of the Rhode Island Senate Chamber in his honor shall
32 serve as a permanent tribute to a man whose life was defined by public service, leadership, and
33 commitment to the State of Rhode Island; and be it further

34 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to

- 1 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to his family.

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