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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

SENATE RESOLUTION

JOYOUSLY CELEBRATING THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RHODE ISLAND
HISPANIC CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Introduced By: Senators Vargas, Dimitri, Murray, Famiglietti, Rogers, LaMountain,
Felag, Acosta, Appollonio, and DiPalma

Date Introduced: May 21, 2026

Referred To: Recommended for Immediate Consideration

1 WHEREAS, Since its founding in 2016, the Rhode Island Hispanic Chamber of
2 Commerce (RIHCC) has served with distinction as one of the leading institutions supporting
3 Latino entrepreneurs, small businesses, immigrant-owned businesses, and underserved business
4 communities across Rhode Island. Since its founding, the RIHCC has worked tirelessly to expand
5 economic opportunity, strengthen business ownership, promote financial inclusion, and ensure
6 that Latino businesses have access to the resources, relationships, and visibility needed to grow
7 and be successful; and

8 WHEREAS, Under the astute leadership of Oscar Mejias, Founder, President, and
9 CEO/Executive Director of the RIHCC, the organization has evolved from being a community-
10 based initiative into a statewide business support organization with more than 1,150 members.
11 Under the leadership of Mr. Mejias, the RIHCC has focused on economic development,
12 entrepreneurship, education, community empowerment, and cultural representation. Mr. Mejias'
13 professional background as a successful business consultant, entrepreneur, public speaker, and
14 community leader has helped position the RIHCC as a bridge between small businesses,
15 government agencies, financial institutions, corporations, and community partners; and

16 WHEREAS, During its first ten years, the RIHCC has provided direct and indirect
17 support to hundreds of entrepreneurs and small businesses throughout Rhode Island, with a strong
18 focus on Latino-owned businesses and historically underserved communities. The Chamber's
19 more than 1,150 members have assisted more than 3,500 businesses since the COVID-19

1 pandemic, have supported the creation and retention of more than 500 jobs, and have connected
2 business owners with training, capital, professional services, and strategic partnerships, by
3 offering these businesses technical assistance, financial readiness support, business education
4 workshops, marketing guidance, networking events, referrals, and mentoring; and

5 WHEREAS, The RIHCC has played a significant role in helping entrepreneurs access
6 capital by preparing them for financing opportunities and, through partnerships with
7 organizations such as the Papitto Opportunity Connection and Navigant Credit Union, has
8 assisted more than 86 small businesses in accessing or preparing for financial support while
9 addressing common barriers to entry; and

10 WHEREAS, The RIHCC has further strengthened Rhode Island’s economy by elevating
11 the visibility and contributions of Latino-owned businesses and creating opportunities for
12 business owners to connect with financial institutions, government, and community partners,
13 while promoting their inclusion in broader economic development efforts, including through
14 signature initiatives such as Latina Women in Business, the Latino Financial Summit, the Annual
15 Breakfast “Café con Leche,” and the Gala de la Hispanidad, which celebrate achievement,
16 promote leadership, and highlight the economic and cultural value of Rhode Island’s Latino
17 community; and

18 WHEREAS, The Rhode Island Hispanic Chamber of Commerce has always been first in
19 line in responding to community needs. During the most recent COVID-19 challenges, as well as
20 the disruptions caused by inflationary pressures, workforce challenges, and barriers to access to
21 capital, the RIHCC became a vital source for trusted information, outreach, and support for
22 Spanish-speaking and bilingual business owners by helping them access emergency resources,
23 public programs, grants, loans, technical assistance, and recovery information. Its culturally
24 appropriate and bilingual approach were vital assets which allowed the organization to reach and
25 assist businesses that may not otherwise have had access to institutional support; now, therefore
26 be it

27 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island hereby heartily congratulates
28 the Rhode Island Hispanic Chamber of Commerce on the joyous occasion of its 10th
29 Anniversary; and be it further

30 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
31 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Mr. Oscar Mejias, Founder, President and
32 CEO, Rhode Island Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

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