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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2011

SENATE RESOLUTION

**CELEBRATING MARCH, 2011, AS "WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH" IN THE STATE OF
RHODE ISLAND**

Introduced By: Senators Paiva Weed, Goodwin, Crowley, and Lynch

Date Introduced: March 23, 2011

Referred To: Recommended for Immediate Consideration

1 WHEREAS, Throughout the history of this great state and our nation, women have
2 pursued just and noble goals, significantly contributing to the very bedrock of our history.
3 Women faced a unique set of obstacles in having their views recognized and in managing work
4 and family, but possessed the strength and initiative to imagine the future's possibilities while still
5 handling the enormity of their day-to-day responsibilities. They challenged gender barriers,
6 fought inequality, won the right to vote, overcame job discrimination, and gave birth to a more
7 enlightened world; and

8 WHEREAS, Women such as Rhode Island's founding mother, Anne Hutchinson, who,
9 after being banished from Massachusetts Bay Colony for her views on religious freedom and
10 gender equality, helped to settle Aquidneck Island in 1637. This great woman was considered a
11 rebel for voicing an alternate view of religion and promoting equality against a male-dominated
12 society, whose law was based on church doctrine. She did this over a century before our
13 "founding fathers" and at a time when women were chattel and questioning the church was
14 unlawful. Her efforts helped to form the cornerstone of Rhode Island and America's historic
15 acceptance of equality for the numerous religious beliefs and various cultures that make this
16 country great; and

17 WHEREAS, Elizabeth Buffum Chace (1806-1899) was often referred to as "the
18 conscience of Rhode Island." She battled slavery, fought for women's suffrage, and defended mill
19 workers' rights. Abolitionist Christiana Carteaux Bannister (1820-1902) spent her life battling

1 social inequities and prejudice, and rose to become a successful entrepreneur and philanthropist;
2 and

3 WHEREAS, More recently, some of the great women shaping our state and broadening
4 the horizon for all women include the late retired Supreme Court Justice Florence Murray, a
5 former legislator who became Rhode Island's first female Chief Judge of the Superior Court in
6 1978, and the first woman to become a member of the Rhode Island Supreme Court in November
7 1999. Senator Lila M. Sapinsley was the first female Minority Leader in Rhode Island. Known
8 as a true "Grande Dame" of Rhode Island Democratic politics, the late Honorable Eleanor F.
9 Slater was a former Rhode Island State Representative and State Senator who significantly
10 contributed to Rhode Island's elderly and fair housing laws. Most recently, the Honorable Senator
11 M. Teresa Paiva Weed became and currently serves as the first woman President of the Rhode
12 Island Senate; and

13 WHEREAS, Our foremothers have often been unsung heroines who sacrificed and
14 endured immense hardships in order to build a robust and equitable nation, and their efforts have
15 paved the way for all women, in every walk of life, to succeed and be recognized; and

16 WHEREAS, Women have demonstrated accomplishments in sports, industry, and the
17 arts, including Mary Katherine Goddard and her widowed mother, who became publishers of the
18 Providence Gazette newspaper, making them the first women publishers in America; Mary Kies,
19 the first woman to receive a patent; Elizabeth Blackwell, the first women to receive a medical
20 degree in the United States; Rebecca Lee Crumpler, the first black woman to receive an M.D.
21 degree; Arabella Mansfield, the first women granted admission to practice law, making her the
22 first woman lawyer; Edith Wharton, the first woman to win a Pulitzer Prize for fiction; Gertrude
23 Ederle, the first woman to swim across the English Channel; Amelia Earhart, the first woman to
24 fly solo across the Atlantic; Muriel "Mickey" Siebert, the first woman to own a seat on the New
25 York Stock Exchange; Pearl S. Buck, the first women to receive the Nobel Prize in literature;
26 Rosa Parks, whose brave refusal to yield her seat on a bus ignited the civil rights movement; and
27 Diane Crump, the first female jockey to ride in the Kentucky Derby, have helped to strengthen
28 and enrich this nation; and

29 WHEREAS, Great women in government such as Victoria Claflin Woodhull, who was
30 the first woman presidential candidate in the United States; Susanna Medora Salter, the first
31 woman elected mayor of an American town; Jeannette Rankin, the first woman to be elected to
32 the U.S. House of Representatives; and Sandra Day O'Connor, the first woman Justice of the
33 Supreme Court, have all helped to mold and shape our democracy; and

34 WHEREAS, Let us also never forget all the brave Rhode Island women and women

1 across America who have served and are serving in the United States military, facing grave
2 dangers, and whose actions are courageous and noble beyond words; and

3 WHEREAS, Women have thoroughly encompassed every undertaking, advancement,
4 and triumph, historically and currently attained in this country, and the magnificent women from
5 Rhode Island's past played a major role in sculpting Rhode Island's history. They are all truly
6 deserving of our recognition and praise; now, therefore be it

7 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
8 hereby recognizes the month of March, 2011, as "Women's History Month" and proclaims such
9 in the State of Rhode Island. We invite the citizens of the state to join us in celebrating the myriad
10 of contributions women have made in our state and nation's history; and be it further

11 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and he hereby is authorized and directed to
12 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the League of Women Voters, the Rhode Island
13 Commission on Women, the Rhode Island Chapter of the National Organization of Women, and
14 the Rhode Island General Assembly Women's Caucus.

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