

2023 -- H 6212

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2023

HOUSE RESOLUTION

CONGRATULATING JOHN STELLITANO ON BEING INDUCTED INTO THE AVIATION
HALL OF FAME AND CELEBRATING THE JOYOUS OCCASION OF HIS 100TH
BIRTHDAY

Introduced By: Representatives Azzinaro, Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Kennedy, Spears,
Vella-Wilkinson, Casey, Casimiro, Solomon, and Place

Date Introduced: March 28, 2023

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, John Stellitano has led a long and glorious life filled with dedication,
2 amazing achievements, adventure, and joy; and

3 WHEREAS, Born on March 28, 1923, at a time when radio had just begun to inform
4 everyday people on the world around them, and women had finally been given the right to vote,
5 both events that would change the political landscape of America, John Stellitano began what
6 would become a remarkable journey; and

7 WHEREAS, Mr. Stellitano was raised in the Town of Westerly, graduating from
8 Westerly High School where he excelled in athletics, lettering in football, where he earned All-
9 State honors, as well as basketball and baseball, and most importantly, where he met the love of
10 his life and future bride, Mary Capalbo; and

11 WHEREAS, With the hope of continuing his education, Mr. Stellitano attended the
12 University of Rhode Island majoring in aeronautical engineering and playing freshman football.
13 A few short months later, in December of 1941, on the ignoble "Day of Infamy", when Japan's
14 attack on Pearl Harbor was aired across the country, John along with many young men across the
15 country, enlisted in the Air Corps; and

16 WHEREAS, Since the age of 14, Mr. Stellitano had harbored an interest in flying and had
17 often been given the opportunity to fly with a friend of the family who owned a seaplane. In May
18 of 1944, he finally reached one of his many goals in life and in the military by earning his wings.
19 He was commissioned as a Flight Officer after two years of military training that encompassed

1 instruction at sites in five different states; and

2 WHEREAS, Shortly thereafter, Mr. Stellitano returned home and against the worries of
3 their families, and in the midst of war while actively serving, he married Mary and the two
4 traveled to Florida for his B-17 training. Upon completion of the grueling weeks of bombing and
5 target navigation, John picked up his brand-new plane and was stationed at Deopham Green
6 Airbase in England, assigned to the 728th Bomb Squadron, 452 Bomb Group, and he and his
7 crew immediately began combat missions; and

8 WHEREAS, During his time flying missions, Mr. Stellitano and crew were hit 6 out of
9 the 36 six times they flew, and on one fateful run, they had to fly blind, while losing altitude,
10 landing precariously on an open field at 114 miles an hour. Miraculously, there were no injuries
11 on board, and on the same day his first child, Sherron, was born; and

12 WHEREAS, In April of 1945, after completing the required 36 missions, Mr. Stellitano
13 was discharged and happily returned home to Mary and his daughter. He soon entered URI,
14 attained his Bachelor's degree in Education, and took employment as a teacher and coach at
15 Lockwood High School in Warwick; and

16 WHEREAS, In 1949, Mr. Stellitano returned to his hometown of Westerly, where he
17 continued teaching and became a local legend in coaching both football and basketball earning
18 him and his teams many awards and the honor of April 30, 1965 being named "John Stellitano
19 Day" in Westerly; and

20 WHEREAS, Throughout his decorated military career and renowned teaching and
21 coaching successes, John Stellitano has consistently held his family as his most cherished and
22 beloved accomplishment. He has been married to Mary for almost 79 years, and his beloved
23 children, Sherron, Steven, and Katheryn, and their spouses Robert, Kathryn, and Michael, have
24 blessed he and Mary with seven beautiful grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren; now,
25 therefore be it

26 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island hereby
27 congratulates John Stellitano on being inducted into the Aviation Hall of Fame and celebrating
28 the joyous occasion of his 100th Birthday; and be it further

29 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
30 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Mr. John Stellitano.

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