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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2017

SENATE RESOLUTION

HONORING JOE BAKER ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE
NEWPORT DAILY NEWS

Introduced By: Senators Paiva Weed, DiPalma, Ruggerio, Goodwin, and Felag

Date Introduced: January 18, 2017

Referred To: Recommended for Immediate Consideration

1 WHEREAS, Joe Baker has retired after thirty-three years of informing and educating the
2 people of Rhode Island on a panoply of journalistic topics; and

3 WHEREAS, As a young man who took his time finding his true career calling, once Joe
4 Baker joined the news staff of The Newport Daily News and put down roots on Aquidneck
5 Island, he knew he had found his forever-home; and

6 WHEREAS, After graduating from Pilgrim High School in 1967, Joe attended a small
7 broadcasting school with the intention of becoming a radio sports announcer, but the Vietnam
8 War changed his course with a four-year tour in the Navy; and

9 WHEREAS, Upon his discharge from the military, Joe spent a few years with no "clear-
10 cut ambition" but with a gusto for just enjoying life. After a few years as a roofer and a brief stint
11 at then-Johnston & Wales College, he enrolled at then-Rhode Island Junior College, transferred to
12 the University of Rhode Island to study journalism, and graduated in 1979; and

13 WHEREAS, While attending URI, Joe had begun to shoot some sports' team pictures
14 which eventually led to meeting the sports editor for the Warwick Beacon, which resulted in his
15 being hired by the paper full-time as an assistant sports editor and city hall reporter after he
16 graduated; and

17 WHEREAS, During his years with the Beacon, Joe discovered that covering politics, not
18 sports, was his Nirvana. In 1984, he joined the staff of The Newport Daily News as a general
19 reporter covering everything from schools to criminal trials to the Navy. In 1989, he began to

1 cover the State House and General Assembly where he soon became an ever-present fixture in the
2 chambers, committee rooms and hallways from January through June; and

3 WHEREAS, People's descriptions of Joe Baker are as wide-ranging as his resume and as
4 varied as his multitude of passions and interests, but they all have a common theme, Joe Baker is
5 widely-respected, thorough and consistently fair-minded. He has been described as a man with "a
6 heart of gold" who would help anyone, a tenacious and reliable reporter, and "a small man who
7 packs a vocal punch"; and

8 WHEREAS, During his tenure at the State House, Joe Baker covered some of the most
9 critical moments in Rhode Island history, the investigation of Joseph Bevilacqua, reform of the
10 state welfare system, and educational reforms. Among the special series he crafted over the years
11 were packages on special education and the 30th anniversary of the 1973 pullout of the Naval
12 fleet from Newport. He earned a reputation as both factual and fair, covering statewide news with
13 a local flair; and

14 WHEREAS, For the past 33 years, Joe Baker has earned the gratitude of the citizens of
15 Aquidneck Island and the respect of the many legislators who have served in the General
16 Assembly. He will now turn the page on a new chapter of his life, with some much deserved time
17 to read, listen to music, play golf, and enjoy life with his wife Patricia at their scenic home
18 overlooking Island Park; now, therefore be it

19 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
20 hereby congratulates Joe Baker on the occasion of his retirement from The Newport Daily News.
21 We moreover commend and thank him on behalf of all Rhode Islanders for his eloquent and
22 informative journalism and wish him the very best health, happiness and enjoyment in all his
23 future endeavors; and be it further

24 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
25 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Mr. Joe Baker.

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