

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2017

SENATE RESOLUTION

PROCLAIMING MARCH 29, 2017, TO BE "ANNUAL SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION  
LEGISLATIVE DAY" IN THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

Introduced By: Senator Roger Picard

Date Introduced: March 29, 2017

Referred To: Recommended for Immediate Consideration

1           WHEREAS, The mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being  
2 and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and  
3 empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. Social work is a  
4 profession for those who have a passion to empower individuals, families, groups, and the  
5 communities they serve in order to create progressive change in clinical and macro settings; and

6           WHEREAS, The following Professional Social Workers were instrumental in creating  
7 key social programs that are so critical to our society. Wilbur Cohen was the chief architect of the  
8 1935 Social Security Act and also was a key member of the committee that designed Medicare  
9 and Medicaid in 1965. Jeanette Rankin was the first woman elected to Congress. Frances Perkins,  
10 Secretary of Labor for FDR, who was recently honored on the front page of the Providence  
11 Journal (March 16, 2017), was responsible for the 40 hour work week and the federal minimum  
12 wage. Jane Addams established Hull House in Chicago in 1884. The John Hope Settlement  
13 House in Providence was molded after Hull House. Dorothea Dix pushed legislation through  
14 Congress in 1854 that would have established asylums for the mentally ill across the nation,  
15 however the law was vetoed by President Pierce. The effort did pay big dividends as it led to  
16 mental health facilities including what later became known as Butler Hospital in Rhode Island;  
17 and

18           WHEREAS, Social workers have helped people in this nation overcome racial strife and  
19 economic and health care uncertainty by successfully advocating for initiatives such as Medicaid,

1 unemployment insurance, workplace safety, Social Security benefits, the Civil Rights Act, the  
2 Voting Rights Act, and the Affordable Care Act; and

3 WHEREAS, Social workers work in all areas of our society to improve happiness, health  
4 and prosperity, including in government, schools, universities, social service agencies,  
5 communities, the military and mental health and health care facilities; and

6 WHEREAS, Social workers are the largest group of mental health care providers in the  
7 United States and work daily to help people overcome depression, anxiety, substance abuse and  
8 other disorders so they can lead more fulfilling lives. In Rhode Island, social workers represent  
9 the largest professional group with mental health licenses, with 2,297 individuals; and

10 WHEREAS, Social work education prepares students for work as qualified professionals.  
11 Social work education offers these future professionals a foundation of core values including:  
12 service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships,  
13 integrity and competence. Social work students are taught aspects of cultural competence,  
14 diversity, ethics and policy in order to confront and eliminate social injustices; and

15 WHEREAS, According the Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of social  
16 workers is expected to increase by 12 percent during the 2014-2024 decade, which is much faster  
17 than the average for all other occupations. Concern about crime, juvenile delinquency, and  
18 services for individuals with physical, psychological, and cognitive disabilities, and individuals  
19 and groups in crisis are impelling the necessity for more social workers; and

20 WHEREAS, The Rhode Island College School of Social Work, Providence College  
21 Department of Social Work, Salve Regina University Department of Social Work, and the  
22 Community College of Rhode Island Social Work Education Program are helping to respond to  
23 the pressing call for future social workers through comprehensive education and training  
24 programs; now, therefore be it

25 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations  
26 hereby proclaims March 29, 2017, to be "Annual Social Work Education Legislative Day" in the  
27 State of Rhode Island. We encourage educators, students, and citizens of this state to participate  
28 in this day, acknowledging the wonderful education offered by the Rhode Island College School  
29 of Social Work, Providence College Department of Social Work, Salve Regina University  
30 Department of Social Work, and the Community College of Rhode Island Social Work Education  
31 Program; and be it further

32 RESOLVED, That this Senate hereby recognizes and honors the great benefits and  
33 invaluable service professionally-trained social workers provide to the citizens of this state; and  
34 be it further

1           RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to  
2 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Rhode Island Chapter of the National  
3 Association of Social Workers, Rhode Island College School of Social Work, Providence College  
4 Department of Social Work, Salve Regina University Department of Social Work, and the  
5 Community College of Rhode Island Social Work Education Program.

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