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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

HOUSE RESOLUTION

EXPRESSING CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF THE HONORABLE BRUCE M.
SELYA

Introduced By: Representatives Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Ajello, Chippendale, Newberry,
Kennedy, Edwards, Bennett, Potter, and Cortvriend

Date Introduced: February 27, 2025

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, It is with deep sadness and regret that this House of Representatives has
2 learned of the passing of the Honorable Bruce Selya, the beloved husband of Cindy Selya, the
3 devoted father of two daughters, the very proud grandfather of six grandchildren, and a highly
4 respected member of the 1st U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals; and

5 WHEREAS, Born in the City of Providence, Judge Selya was the son of Herman and
6 Betty Selya. He attended Nathan Bishop Middle School and Classical High School, where he
7 excelled academically, graduating magna cum laude from Harvard University, and earning his
8 law degree cum laude from Harvard Law School; and

9 WHEREAS, After serving as a law clerk to Judge Edward W. Day of the U.S. District
10 Court for the District of Rhode Island from 1958 to 1960, Judge Selya maintained a flourishing
11 private practice in Providence for two decades while also serving as a Judge on the Lincoln
12 Probate Court from 1965 to 1972. In July of 1982, he was nominated by U.S. Senator John
13 Chafee to a seat on the U.S. District Court for the District of Rhode Island, was appointed by
14 President Ronald Reagan, and confirmed by the Senate on August 18, 1982. He was later elevated
15 to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit, assuming senior status in 2006, and was an
16 active senior member until his final day; and

17 WHEREAS, Earning admiration and recognition from his peers, Judge Selya merited
18 myriad professional distinctions and privileges over the course of his lifetime. He was the first
19 person of the Jewish faith to be appointed to the federal bench in Rhode Island, had authored over

1 1,800 Judicial opinions, and was a dedicated mentor to numerous law clerks; and

2 WHEREAS, Judge Selya possessed a brilliant mind and was nationally renowned for his
3 playful writing style and vast vocabulary of arcane words fondly known as "Selyaisms". He had
4 also served on the board of a panoply of local institutions including the Jewish Federation of
5 Rhode Island, Bryant University, Roger Williams University School of Law, the Rhode Island
6 Historical Society, and was the founding Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Lifespan
7 health system; and

8 WHEREAS, Described as "a man of great wisdom, integrity, modesty, wit, and high
9 ethical standards", the Honorable Bruce Selya had the love of his family and friends, the
10 admiration of his peers, the respect of the legal community, and the gratitude of the citizens of
11 Rhode Island, and he will be profoundly missed by those who had the good fortune to be a part of
12 his vital and fulfilling life; now, therefore be it

13 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island hereby
14 expresses deepest sympathies on the passing of the Honorable Bruce M. Selya. He will forever be
15 remembered as a highly respected and admired judge who presided with fairness and justice, and
16 served the people of Rhode Island with integrity and excellence; and be it further

17 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
18 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to Mrs. Cynthia Selya and Family.

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