

2015 -- H 6310

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2015

H O U S E R E S O L U T I O N

**HONORING SGT. MATTHEW ZARRELLA ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT
FROM THE RHODE ISLAND STATE POLICE**

Introduced By: Representatives Giarrusso, Craven, Costa, and Reilly

Date Introduced: June 11, 2015

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, In the words of Matt Zarrella, "I believe that God put me on Earth to work
2 with animals and help my fellow human beings." And for the past twenty-five years, he has been
3 doing exactly that and the people of Rhode Island and across the nation have reaped the rewards
4 of his dedication; and

5 WHEREAS, The powerfully built former Marine, who emanates confidence, focus, and
6 stamina has been on the job with the Rhode Island State Police for the past two and a half
7 decades. Twenty years ago, Matt, also known as the "Dog Whisperer" along with his dog
8 Hannibal, were called to assist in a search and rescue for a teenager lost in Rhode Island's woods;
9 and

10 WHEREAS, Matt had already been involved in Search & Rescue and K-9 training since
11 1991, and had trained Hannibal for just this type of mission. Matt and Hannibal found the injured
12 boy and their successful rescue launched the beginning of Hannibal's career as a police dog and
13 Matt's as a trainer of search and rescue dogs for the State Police; and

14 WHEREAS, Matt created the first Canine Search & Rescue standards for the Rhode
15 Island State Police and the State of Rhode Island, and has handled and trained K-9 teams in
16 human remains detection, wilderness, disaster, water, trailing, and article search. The state's
17 canine force now includes seventeen handlers and seventeen specialized dogs; and

18 WHEREAS, In addition, Matt has conducted missing person's searches for local, state
19 and federal law enforcement agencies, the United States Peace Corps, and the United States

1 Military, often traveling to various countries such as Vietnam, Colombia, and Bolivia, to work
2 missing persons and missing in action military personnel cases with his canines; and

3 WHEREAS, The four-legged recruits Matt has enlisted are quite often rescues
4 themselves. He obtains lists from various shelters and with a nose for finding just the right dog,
5 an experienced and deft training touch, and just the right amount of positive reinforcement based
6 on praise and reward, Matt has turned a panoply of contenders into heroes; and

7 WHEREAS, During his state police career, Matt has earned numerous awards for his
8 work, including two special commendations and a unit citation. He is truly "an officer and a
9 gentleman" and the citizenry of this state lead far safer and more secure lives due to his
10 extraordinary career; and

11 WHEREAS, Matt and his wife Kristen make their home in Saunderstown, where his pack
12 of canines reside in immaculate downstairs quarters and romp in a big grassy backyard. Upon
13 retirement from the State Police, he will continue to do the work he loves with man's best friends
14 through his business, American Patriot K-9 Training; now, therefore be it

15 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island and
16 Providence Plantations hereby recognizes, honors, and thanks Matthew Zarrella on the occasion
17 of his retirement after twenty-five years of loyal and distinguished service with the Rhode Island
18 State Police. We wish him good health, fulfillment and continued success in all his future
19 endeavors; and be it further

20 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
21 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Sgt. Matthew Zarrella.

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