

**2016 -- H 8359**

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**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND**

**IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2016**

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

**HONORING HENRY SHELTON FOR MORE THAN FIVE DECADES OF ADVOCACY  
AND COMMITMENT FOR SOCIAL CHANGE IN RHODE ISLAND**

Introduced By: Representatives Handy, Barros, Tobon, Coughlin, and Johnston

Date Introduced: June 16, 2016

Referred To: House read and passed

1           WHEREAS, Henry Shelton began his journey to comfort and serve his fellow man as a  
2 Catholic priest. He left the church but continued on the path in pursuit of economic justice and  
3 empowerment for the disadvantaged and less fortunate in our state; and

4           WHEREAS, Since the mid-60s, Henry Shelton has ardently and tirelessly shaped and  
5 spearheaded multiple campaigns to help the poor by establishing a panoply of programs,  
6 initiatives, and strategies that have fed, sheltered, warmed and empowered countless Rhode  
7 Islanders; and

8           WHEREAS, In 1981, Mr. Shelton founded the Wiley Center and served as Director for  
9 more than three decades. It was named for Rhode Islander George Wiley who was active in the  
10 Civil and Welfare Rights movements and is a grassroots organization that advocates for  
11 systematic changes aimed at alleviating problems associated with poverty for low-income Rhode  
12 Islanders; and

13           WHEREAS, Mr. Shelton has helped start numerous additional organizations including RI  
14 Welfare Rights, The Coalition for Consumer Justice, W.A.G.E., and the RI Handicapped Action  
15 Committee; and

16           WHEREAS, Often testifying into the late night hours at the State House, Mr. Shelton  
17 spearheaded an arrearage forgiveness program for LIHEAP-eligible low-income residential  
18 households who have had their utility services shut off for non-payment or who have been  
19 scheduled for shutoff. The initiative, known as The Henry Shelton Act, became effective in

1 October of 2011; and

2 WHEREAS, In addition, Mr. Shelton has been a vital component and driving force  
3 behind many consumer and community welfare programs such as the utility shutoff policy, the  
4 elimination of the sales tax on clothing, handicapped access all over the state, the defeat of the  
5 Charlestown Nuclear Plant, and universal free breakfast for school children; and

6 WHEREAS, Henry Shelton's legacy mirrors the mission he established for the Wiley  
7 Center. He built and now bequeaths a community movement and organization that addresses  
8 human needs and redresses injustices, and his voice will never be quieted, through door-to-door  
9 community organizing and grassroots advocacy alliances, he has created and leaves a system in  
10 place that will continue his good work for decades to come; now, therefore be it

11 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island and  
12 Providence Plantations hereby thanks and honors Henry Shelton for more than five decades of  
13 dedicated commitment to social change and advocacy for those less fortunate. We wish him much  
14 happiness and good health for many years to come; and be it further

15 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to  
16 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Mr. Henry Shelton.

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