

2023 -- S 1020

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2023

SENATE RESOLUTION

EXPRESSING CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF JAMES J. GILLIS

Introduced By: Senators Euer, and DiPalma

Date Introduced: May 15, 2023

Referred To: Placed on the Senate Consent Calendar

1 WHEREAS, It is with deep sadness that this Senate has learned of the passing of James J.
2 Gillis of Middletown, the devoted husband of Julie Bisbano and a highly respected and
3 distinguished longtime reporter and columnist for the Newport Daily News; and

4 WHEREAS, Mr. Gillis was born in Providence, and was raised in Pawtucket. He was the
5 son of the late James Gillis Sr., and the late Barbara Gillis. He attended Tolman High School and
6 attained a Bachelor's degree in Journalism from the University of Rhode Island; and

7 WHEREAS, Mr. Gillis began his professional career as a journalist in 1980 when he
8 joined the staff of the Newport Daily News. He would soon become a fixture within the Newport
9 and Aquidneck Island scene as he covered all aspects of life in the community, from wealthy
10 socialites and elected figures to the daily struggles of the working class and those down on their
11 luck. His work always exhibited great sympathy for those living on the margins of society. His
12 Friday "Spare Change" column became a must read in the community; and

13 WHEREAS, Mr. Gillis also had great love for the arts and music. He covered the
14 Newport Jazz and Folk Festivals each summer, as well as other important arts & cultural events,
15 including the Newport Music festival and the now-defunct Newport International Film Festival,
16 and his work was always enlightening and entertaining; and

17 WHEREAS, Mr. Gillis will be long remembered for his tireless work ethic, his strong
18 support for local journalism, and his incredible memory and ability to recall facts and events from
19 the past at a moment's notice. He was also admired for both being a great conversationalist and a
20 good listener, an ability he felt was an important skill for a news reporter to have. Mr. Gillis, who

1 suffered from kidney disease and needed a transplant, was a tireless advocate for organ
2 transplants and a compassionate supporter of those beginning and undergoing dialysis; and

3 WHEREAS, In his free time, Mr. Gillis, along with his wife, Julie, had a love for reading,
4 writing, interesting conversations while dining out, and a passion for the TV show *Jeopardy*; and

5 WHEREAS, In addition to his wife, Julie Bisbano, Mr. Gillis leaves behind his sister,
6 Cynthia Gillis, his uncle and godfather, Joseph Gillis Sr., and many cousins, nieces, nephews and
7 friends; now, therefore be it

8 RESOLVED, That This Senate of the State of Rhode Island hereby expresses its deepest
9 condolences on the passing of James J. Gillis; and be it further

10 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
11 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Ms. Julie Bisbano and the Gillis Family.

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