

2014 -- S 2114

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2014

JOINT RESOLUTION

REAFFIRMING THE FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND
TAIWAN, COMMENDING TAIWAN'S ROLE AS PEACEMAKER IN THE EAST CHINA
SEA, AND SUPPORTING BILATERAL TRADE RELATIONS AND TAIWAN'S
PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Introduced By: Senators Picard, Cote, and Crowley

Date Introduced: January 21, 2014

Referred To: Senate Special Legislation and Veterans Affairs

1 WHEREAS, The United States and the Republic of China (Taiwan) share a most
2 important relationship supported by the common values of freedom, democracy, rule of law, and
3 a free market economy; and

4 WHEREAS, President Ma Ying-jeou has worked tirelessly to uphold democratic
5 principles in Taiwan, to ensure the prosperity of Taiwan's 23 million people, to promote
6 Taiwan's international standing, and to further improve relations between the United States and
7 Taiwan; and

8 WHEREAS, Taiwan and the United States share the common goal of peace in the East
9 China Sea. Taiwan proposed an East China Sea Peace Initiative on August 5, 2012, urging all
10 parties concerned to exercise restraint, avoid actions that could escalate confrontation in the
11 region, shelve disputes, not abandon dialogue, and observe international law to resolve disputes in
12 a peaceful manner; and

13 WHEREAS, The United States and Taiwan, and especially Rhode Island, share a
14 historically close relationship, marked by strong bilateral trade, educational and cultural
15 exchange, scientific and technological interests, and tourism; and

16 WHEREAS, Taiwan is now a member of the United States Visa Waiver Program
17 (effective November 1, 2012), reflecting the friendship, trust, and cooperation shared between the
18 two countries, and making travel between Taiwan and the United States for business and tourism

1 even more convenient; and

2 WHEREAS, The United States ranks as Taiwan's 3rd largest trading partner. Taiwan is
3 the 11th largest trading partner of the United States. Bilateral trade in goods and services between
4 the United States and Taiwan was approximately \$85 billion in 2013. New England exported \$1.4
5 billion in goods to Taiwan of which Rhode Island exported \$66 million in goods, mostly primary
6 metal manufacturing, manufactured commodities, machinery, and chemicals; and

7 WHEREAS, Talks on the Taiwan-United States Trade and Investment Framework
8 Agreement (TIFA) resumed on March 10, 2013. Negotiations for a Bilateral Investment
9 Agreement (BIA) between Taiwan and the United States is an important step towards
10 strengthening bilateral trade and paving the way for entering into a Free Trade Agreement (FTA)
11 between our countries, thereby increasing Rhode Island's exports to Taiwan and creating greater
12 bilateral investment and technical collaboration through tariff reduction and trade facilitation
13 measures; and

14 WHEREAS, United States President Barack Obama and the leaders of eight Trans-
15 Pacific Partnership (TPP) countries announced the achievement of the broad outlines for a 21st
16 century TPP agreement on November 12, 2011, in which Taiwan has expressed a keen interest to
17 participate, so as to forge close linkages among economies, enhance competitiveness, and benefit
18 consumers; and

19 WHEREAS, The Asia-Pacific is the largest market in the world for United States exports
20 and the share of Rhode Island exported goods bound for TPP countries is 40 percent. In addition,
21 Rhode Island jobs supported by trade with TPP countries is estimated to be 51,200, with 1,783
22 companies exporting goods from Rhode Island in 2011, and 15 TPP companies with investments
23 in Rhode Island; and

24 WHEREAS, Taiwan is the 18th largest trading economy in the world and is a member of
25 the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, which promotes free trade and economic
26 cooperation throughout the Asia-Pacific region; and

27 WHEREAS, The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
28 is the world's key instrument to deal with climate change. A concerted global effort to combat the
29 challenges posed by climate change requires that Taiwan also be included in the work of the
30 UNFCCC, and Taiwan has expressed a keen interest to participate in this global effort; now,
31 therefore be it

32 RESOLVED, That this General Assembly of the State of Rhode Island and Providence
33 Plantations hereby reaffirms the friendship between Rhode Island and the Republic of China
34 (Taiwan), and commends Taiwan's role as peacemaker in the East China Sea. We furthermore

1 urge the signing of a United States-Taiwan Bilateral Investment Agreement (BIA) and Free Trade
2 Agreement so as to further strengthen Rhode Island-Taiwan trade relations, and support Taiwan's
3 participation in international organizations and agreements, including the United Nations
4 Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Trans-Pacific Partnership; and be it further
5 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
6 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Honorable Barack Obama, President of the
7 United States; the Rhode Island Congressional Delegation; Governor Lincoln D. Chafee;
8 President Ma Ying-jeou, on behalf of the 23 million citizens of Taiwan; and Anne Hung,
9 Director-General of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Boston.

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