

2016 -- S 2335

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2016

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JOINT RESOLUTION

REAFFIRMING THE FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN RHODE ISLAND AND TAIWAN,  
COMMENDING TAIWAN'S ACHIEVEMENT ON ITS ELECTION OF THE 14TH TERM  
PRESIDENT, ENHANCING BILATERAL RELATIONS, AND SUPPORTING TAIWAN IN  
THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

Introduced By: Senators Crowley, Picard, Cote, Walaska, and Lombardo

Date Introduced: February 10, 2016

Referred To: Senate Commerce

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

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

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

12           WHEREAS, Taiwan proposed the South China Sea Peace Initiative on May 26, 2015 as a  
13 practical, viable solution to set aside territorial disputes and focus on joint exploration,  
14 cooperation, and development of economic resources. Taiwan urges all concerned parties to  
15 shelve sovereignty disputes, observe international law, exercise restraint, safeguard peace and  
16 stability, and refrain from unilateral action to ensure peace and stability; and

17           WHEREAS, Taiwan has achieved a full democracy, replete with free and transparent  
18 elections, including direct vote of the 14th Term President and Vice President, in January, 2016,

1 and thereby providing a beacon of hope and a model for all peoples in the Asia-Pacific region  
2 who desire to live under freedom and democracy; and

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

6 WHEREAS, Taiwan has been a member of the U.S. Visa Waiver Program since  
7 November 1, 2012, reflecting the friendship, trust and cooperation shared between our two  
8 countries, and making travel between Taiwan and the United States for business and tourism even  
9 more convenient, and since 2012, the number of Taiwan visitors to the United States has  
10 increased by 40 percent annually, reaching almost half a million visitors in 2014; and

11 WHEREAS, The United States ranks as Taiwan's 2nd largest trading partner, and Taiwan  
12 is the 10th largest trading partner of the United States, with bilateral trade in goods and services  
13 from January to November, 2015, between the United States and Taiwan amounting to \$61.5  
14 billion, and said trade has created or supported at least 400,000 United States jobs according to  
15 the United States Department of Commerce. New England exported more than \$1 billion in  
16 goods to Taiwan of which Rhode Island exported \$90.8 million in goods, mostly in primary  
17 metal, chemicals, and machinery, making Taiwan Rhode Island's 2nd largest export market in  
18 Asia and 7th largest export market in the world (2014); and

19 WHEREAS, Talks on the Taiwan-US Trade and Investment Framework Agreement  
20 (TIFA), resumed on March 10, 2013, and negotiations for a Bilateral Investment Agreement  
21 (BIA) between Taiwan and the United States is an important step towards strengthening bilateral  
22 trade and paving the way for entering into a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between our countries,  
23 thereby increasing Rhode Island's exports to Taiwan and creating greater bilateral investment and  
24 technical collaboration; and

25 WHEREAS, United States President Barack Obama and the leaders of eight Trans-  
26 Pacific Partnership (TPP) countries announced the achievement of the broad outlines for a 21st  
27 century TPP agreement on November 12, 2011, and later reached by twelve Pacific Rim countries  
28 on October 5, 2015, and in which Taiwan, the 19th largest trading economy in the world, has  
29 expressed a keen interest to participate, so as to forge close linkages among economies, enhance  
30 competitiveness, and benefit consumers; and

31 WHEREAS, Taiwan has attended the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)  
32 assembly as a special guest since 2013, and it remains in the interest of the traveling public that  
33 Taiwan be included in the ICAO because Taiwan is a key transport hub in the Asia-Pacific region  
34 and the Taipei Flight Information Region (TAIPEI FIR) under Taiwan's jurisdiction covers an

1 area of 176,000 square nautical miles with as many as 1.8 million controlled flights, most  
2 international, with over 40 million travelers passing through annually, and Taiwan reiterates its  
3 commitment to ICAO standards and seeks to expand its meaningful participation in the ICAO,  
4 including attending technical and regional meetings, and related activities in 2016; and

5 WHEREAS, The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)  
6 adopted in Paris on December 12, 2015, is the world's key instrument to deal with climate change  
7 and a concerted global effort to combat the challenges posed by climate change requires that  
8 Taiwan be included in the work of the UNFCCC and Taiwan has expressed a keen interest to  
9 participate in the global effort to address climate change; now, therefore be it

10 RESOLVED, That this General Assembly of the State of Rhode Island and Providence  
11 Plantations hereby reaffirms Joint Resolution 2015-H 5198 passed on March 6, 2015,  
12 "Reaffirming the Friendship between the State of Rhode Island and Taiwan, Enhancing Bilateral  
13 Trade Relations, and Supporting Taiwan in the International Community," and furthermore  
14 commends Taiwan's 2016 Presidential election, Taiwan's role as peacemaker in the East and  
15 South China Seas, and urges the signing of the U.S.-Taiwan Bilateral Investment Agreement  
16 (BIA) and Free Trade Agreement, so as to further strengthen Rhode Island-Taiwan trade  
17 relations, and support Taiwan's participation in international organizations and agreements,  
18 including UNFCCC, ICAO, and regional economic integration, including the TPP; and be it  
19 further

20 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to  
21 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Honorable Barack Obama, President of the  
22 United States, the Rhode Island Congressional Delegation, Governor Gina Raimondo, President  
23 Ma Ying jeou, on behalf of the 23 million citizens of Taiwan, and Scott Lai, Director-General of  
24 the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Boston.

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