



RHODE ISLAND
FEDERATION OF TEACHERS AND
HEALTH PROFESSIONALS AFT
AFL - CIO

To: Senate Committee on Special Legislation and Veterans Affairs
From: Maribeth Calabro, President
Date: March 4, 2026
Re: **Relating to Motor and Other Vehicles**
Testimony in Support of 2026- S 2413 (Senator Lauria, et. al.)

Dear Committee Members,

I am here this afternoon to speak in strong support for S2413 An Act Relating to Motor Vehicles- as a lifelong friend of Senator Goodwin and one of many relatives, friends, and colleagues whose lives were profoundly altered by her death. I respectfully urge your support for the introduction and passage of this legislation establishing the Partnership to Reduce Cancer in Rhode Island – Maryellen Goodwin motor vehicle license plate.

Maryellen devoted her life to serving others. As you know, Maryellen Goodwin was a tireless advocate for Rhode Island families and a champion for public health. But to me, she was more than a public servant — she was family to us in every way that matters.

Losing her to colon cancer was devastating beyond words for all who knew and loved her. It was not only the loss of her voice in the community, but the loss of her friendship, her loyalty, her quick wit, and her unwavering belief that we can always do more to care for one another. Her passing left an emptiness that is felt every day by those who were honored to call her sister, friend, aunt her and by the countless Rhode Islanders she served.

This proposed license plate, which will benefit the Partnership to Reduce Cancer in Rhode Island, is more than a symbolic gesture. It is a practical and meaningful step toward raising awareness of colon cancer, encouraging early detection, and supporting organizations that work tirelessly to prevent other families from experiencing the same heartbreak. The structure outlined in this bill (including appropriate oversight, minimum order requirements, annual reporting, and designated use of funds) reflects thoughtful stewardship and accountability.

Maryellen believed deeply in turning pain into purpose. Establishing this plate in her name ensures that her legacy continues in a way that aligns with her lifelong commitment to public health and community service. Every plate on the road will serve as a reminder of the importance of screening, education, and prevention.

No legislation can undo the pain and heartache of loss we carry each day. But this act can save lives. It can spark conversations. It can encourage someone to schedule a screening that might otherwise have waited too long. And if even one life is saved because awareness was raised, then Maryellen’s legacy will continue to make a difference in the lives of Rhode Islanders.

I respectfully ask you to support this bill and allow Maryellen’s name to stand as a beacon for colon cancer awareness throughout Rhode Island.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

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