

State Senator Leonidas Raptakis

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PRESS RELEASE

His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios, Sen. Raptakis and RI's Hellenic community celebrate the 202nd anniversary of Greek Independence Day and the Feast of the Annunciation at the State House

Greek Consul General Symeon Tegos and Rhode Island General Officers join local Greek leaders for the 30th consecutive year of celebrating Greek Independence Day at the State House



Participants in the 202nd anniversary of Greek Independence celebration held in the State Room on March 21, 2023.

STATE HOUSE – State Senator Leonidas P. Raptakis (D-Dist. 33, Coventry, West Greenwich) and Rhode Island's Hellenic communities hosted a celebration of Greek Independence Day at the Rhode Island State House on Tuesday, bringing together state leaders and members of all three Hellenic communities from Cranston, Newport and Pawtucket to recognize the 202nd anniversary of Greece's independence.

The event included the Consul General of Greece to New England Symeon Tegos and His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Boston, who also met privately with Governor Dan McKee, Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio (D-Dist. 4, North Providence, Providence) and Senate Majority Leader Ryan W. Pearson (D-Dist. 19, Cumberland, Lincoln).



Leaders of Rhode Island's Greek community, Consul General of Greece to New England Symeon Tegos and Nicholas Larigakis, the President and CEO of the American Hellenic Institute, meeting with Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio, Senate Majority Leader Ryan W. Person, Sen. Dawn Euer and Senator Leonidas Raptakis in the Senate President's office before the celebration.

Throughout the day, Greece's national flag was flown in four different areas of the Rhode Island State House: the Governor's State Room, the Senate chamber, the House chamber and atop the State House building. The State House dome will be lit in blue and white in honor Greek Independence Day for the week. Following the ceremonies in the Senate and House chambers, a program was held in the Governor's State Room, with remarks offered by Consul General Tegos, Governor Dan McKee and Secretary of State Gregg Amore. Also speaking was Captain Michael Paraskevopoulos of the Hellenic Navy, Meron Reuben, the Ambassador of Israel to New England, and Avi Nevel of the RI Israel Collaborative. Andrea Vastis was this year's co-emcee from the host community of the Assumption Greek Orthodox Church in Pawtucket.

The state's Congressional delegation, Sens. Jack Reed and Sheldon Whitehouse and Congressmen Cicilline and Magaziner sent letters of greetings and support, which were read at the celebration.

"For over 30 years, this event has been held in the General Assembly chambers and the State Room and it is always a wonderful expression of our strong Hellenic community in Rhode Island and the strong connection between this state, known for its commitment to independence, and the nation which was the birthplace of democracy," said Raptakis. "I want

to thank the Senate for hosting this event, passing the resolution during their session, and consistently supporting Hellenic issues over the years. I am grateful to all of the legislators and general officers who attended again this year, coming together in the Rhode Island State House to take part in this special celebration, including the many Hellenes who participated from Connecticut and Massachusetts. Our community shares in the values of Greece."



Sen. Leonidas P. Raptakis presiding over the 202nd anniversary of Greek Independence celebration held in the State Room on March 21.

As part of the main program in the Governor's State Room, His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Boston delivered the invocation and benediction. Father Andrew George and Father Nicholas Lanzourakis from the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church Cranston, Father Aaron Walker from the St. Spyridon Greek Orthodox Church Newport and Father Philip Zymaris of the Assumption Greek Orthodox Pawtucket participated in the program. The audience joined together to sing the national anthems of the United States and the Hellenic Republic.



His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Boston delivering the invocation to open the 202nd celebration of Greek Independence held at the State House.

Nicholas Larigakis, President and CEO of the American Hellenic Institute from Washington, D.C., delivered the keynote remarks at the event. Also speaking was the First Vice-President of the Federation of Hellenic-American Societies of New England Kostas Travayakis.

Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church Greek Language teachers Koula Rougas and Ioanna Andreopoulou, Assumption Greek Orthodox Church teachers Panayiota Vastis, Stavroula Papavasileiou and Sophia Augoustakis, and St. Spyridon Greek Orthodox Church teachers Eleni Anagnostopoulos and Loula Eliopoulos facilitated the children's program from their respective communities. Parish council presidents and American Hellenic Education Progressive Association presidents were also in attendance, including George Karalls and Ioannis Apostolakis of Assumption Greek Orthodox, Theofanos Markos and George Coclin of Annunciation Greek Orthodox and Elaine Holder and Leon Panteleos of St. Spyridon Greek Orthodox. Demetria Carr, President of the Philoptochos from Annunciation, and Athena Eliopoulos, President of the Philoptochos from St. Spyridon were also present.

Students from the Assumption Greek Orthodox Church, Markos Kimbouris and Harris Stathakis recited the poem "To Ellinopouloa and Theodore Soares of the St. Spyridon Greek Orthodox Church recited "Glory and Honor." Andreas Taxiarchos of the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church recited "The Glory."



Eleni Demetroules, Theodoros Campos and Evangelos Dokos from the Assumption Greek Orthodox Church recited “Long Live 1821” and Constantine Haralambidis of the St. Spyridon Greek Orthodox recited the poem, “Hellas.” Konstantinos Marantidis, Alexander Taxiarchos and Konstantinos Rougas from Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church sang hymns for the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary and Freedom of Greece.



Children from all three Greek churches joined together and sang the song, “All Glory, All Grace.”



Children from the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, the Assumption Greek Orthodox Church and St. Spyridon Greek Orthodox Church participating in the celebration.

The Rhode Island Senate passed a resolution ([2023-S 0689](#)) sponsored by Senator Raptakis commemorating the Feast of the Annunciation and the 202nd Anniversary of Greece's independence and highlighting the continuing bonds between both the United States and Greece. Most importantly, the resolution recognized the continuing support by the United States to the people of Greece, especially during the economic crisis that has plagued the country the last several years, and the expanding economic, energy partnership and military cooperation in the eastern Mediterranean.



Rhode Island House Speaker K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick) and Representative Joseph McNamara (D-Dist. 19, Warwick, Cranston) hosted the Greek

dignitaries in the House of Representatives, with Father Andrew George offering the invocation to open the House session along with Father Nicholas Lanzourakis .

A reception, sponsored by the Assumption Greek Orthodox Church, was held in Pawtucket following the program at the State House.

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