

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD

TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-THREE

**JOINT RESOLUTION HONORING THE CAMBODIAN
NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE**

WHEREAS, beginning in April 1975 and ending in January 1979, between 1,700,000 to 3,000,000 people, approximately 25% of the population, were deliberately and systematically killed in Cambodia in one of the worst human tragedies of the modern era; and

WHEREAS, in 1975, Pol Pot led the Communist guerilla group, the Khmer Rouge, in a large-scale insurgency in Cambodia that resulted in the removal of Cambodians from their homes and into labor camps in an attempt to restructure Khmer society; and

WHEREAS, traditional Khmer culture and society were systematically destroyed, including the destruction of temples, schools, hospitals and other buildings; and

WHEREAS, families were separated in an attempt by the Khmer Rouge to prevent traditional family formation; and

WHEREAS, the Khmer Rouge maintained control by mass public torture, executions and dismantling of the social order; and

WHEREAS, men, women and children were sent to labor camps and forced to do strenuous farm work, and famine and disease became epidemic while medicine and medical care were nonexistent; and

WHEREAS, after the Khmer Rouge regime was overthrown in 1979, thousands of Cambodians fled to refugee camps and approximately 145,149 Cambodians made their way to the United States between 1975 and 1999, with the majority of Cambodians arriving in the early 1980s; and

WHEREAS, despite their tremendous loss, Cambodians and Cambodian Americans have shown courage and resiliency; and

WHEREAS, the memory of those Cambodians who were killed during the Cambodian genocide must never be forgotten and the survivors of the Cambodian genocide should be honored; and

WHEREAS, Cambodian refugees have done much to further successful resettlement for others in the United States, including through mutual assistance associations organized by previously resettled Southeast Asian refugees to help new refugees through the provision of essential social, psychological, cultural, educational and economic services; and

WHEREAS, while remembering and honoring both their traditional culture and their traumatic past, the new generation of Cambodian Americans is contributing to American society in meaningful ways; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Thirty-first Legislature now assembled in the First Special Session, on behalf of the people we represent, take this

opportunity to recognize May 20, 2023 as the Cambodian National Day of Remembrance, a day to remember the Cambodian genocide, which took place from April 1975 to January 1979.