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JOINT RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF CIVIC EDUCATION

WHEREAS, it is in the interest of the State and the United States of America that civic education be promoted, as civic education is the cultivation of the virtues, knowledge and skills necessary for political participation and the development of competence and motivation to engage actively in community issues; and

WHEREAS, civic education prepares the people of a country, especially the young, to carry out their roles as citizens and provides the skills necessary to participate as effective and responsible citizens; and

WHEREAS, our education system has long recognized the obligation of preparing future citizens for participation in public life, and the Maine system of learning results places emphasis on citizenship education, specifically complementing identified core social studies curricula in government, history, geography and economics; and

WHEREAS, an actively engaged, enlightened and responsible citizenry, using democratic procedures for making decisions and managing conflict, is in the best interest of the State; and

WHEREAS, the cultivation of a public disposition, including civility, a sense of personal efficacy and a belief in advancing the public good, is essential to civic-mindedness in recognizing the situation of others in a shared political community; and

WHEREAS, in a vital democratic society, we recognize the need for citizens to develop respect for the law, the responsibility to scrutinize its consequences and the courage to challenge and effect change in pursuit of liberty and justice; and

WHEREAS, we recognize the responsibility to develop in Maine's youth the knowledge, experience and leadership skills needed to achieve personal success and make a positive contribution to society; and

WHEREAS, as Thomas Jefferson indicated, the people are the proper depository of the ultimate powers of society, and education is necessary to inform their discretion; and

WHEREAS, as Alexis de Tocqueville also indicated, the formal political meeting or event in a democracy helps bring civic participation within the people's reach, teaching citizens how to use and enjoy it; and

WHEREAS, truly outstanding events and programs organized by community service, academic and professional organizations currently exist to provide excellent experiences in civic education for Maine high school students; now, therefore, be it

That, We, the Members of the One Hundred and Twenty-third Legislature now assembled in the Second Regular Session, on behalf of the people we represent, take this opportunity to

recognize the exceptional value of the following organizations that help provide outstanding civic education in the State:

1. Maine Youth in Government, the Model State Legislature program sponsored by the State YMCA;
2. We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution, a program sponsored by the Center for Civic Education;
3. The Maine State High School Mock Trial Competition, sponsored by the Maine State Bar Association and organized by Maine Law and Civics Education at the University of Maine School of Law;
4. The Dirigo Boys State program sponsored by the American Legion and the Dirigo Girls State program sponsored by the American Legion Auxiliary;
5. The Speech and Debate program sponsored by the Maine Principals' Association in partnership with the Maine Forensic Association; and
6. The Maine Model United Nations Conference hosted by the University of Southern Maine; and be it further

That school administrators, teachers, parents and students are encouraged to obtain information on these programs so that these outstanding learning and leadership experiences may become an opportunity for Maine students at the many high schools at which they do not yet exist.