

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD

TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-ONE

**JOINT RESOLUTION CELEBRATING MARCH 25, 2021 AS THE
200TH ANNIVERSARY OF GREEK INDEPENDENCE AND
CELEBRATING DEMOCRACY IN GREECE AND THE UNITED
STATES**

WHEREAS, on March 25, 1821, the Feast Day of the Annunciation, the Greek nation began a war of independence and overthrew the Ottoman Empire, which had oppressed and enslaved its people since the fall of Constantinople in 1453, and by this war reinstated a democracy, reclaiming its ancient heritage as the "Cradle of Democracy"; and

WHEREAS, the people of the United States generously offered humanitarian assistance to the Greek people during their struggle for independence; and

WHEREAS, the price for Greece in holding onto the values our nations hold in common has been high, as hundreds of thousands of civilians were killed in Greece during World War II; and

WHEREAS, modern-day Greece is a valuable and trusted ally of the United States and is one of only 3 nations in the world outside of the former British Empire that have joined the United States in every major international conflict in the last 100 years; and

WHEREAS, Greece, located in a region where Christianity meets Islam and Judaism, maintains excellent relations with Muslim nations and Israel and demonstrates religious tolerance; and

WHEREAS, Greece and the United States are at the forefront of the effort for freedom, democracy, peace, stability and human rights; and

WHEREAS, many American philhellenes participated and fought in the Greek War of Independence; and

WHEREAS, on October 4, 2019, United States Secretary of State Mike Pompeo visited Greece, where he met with Greek leaders, and together they signed an update to the Mutual Defense Cooperation Agreement; and

WHEREAS, Maine has been served in the United States Congress by 2 Greek Americans: the Honorable Peter Kyros, who served in the House of Representatives from 1967 to 1975, and the Honorable Olympia Snowe, who served in the House of Representatives from 1979 to 1995 and the Senate from 1995 to 2013; and

WHEREAS, the World Hellenic Inter-Parliamentary Association, or "WHIA," composed of several hundred members in over 30 countries, is the premier organization promoting Hellenism among the Greek diaspora over the past 2 decades and its recent president, Peter Katsambanis, has called upon Hellenes abroad to help other nations celebrate their heritage; and

WHEREAS, two Greek American former members of the Maine Legislature, the Honorable Zachary Matthews and the Honorable Stavros Mendros, helped form the WHIA, with the Honorable Stavros Mendros being a charter member and elected to the inaugural board of directors; and

WHEREAS, a high-level review of the United States-Greece Strategic Dialogue took place in Greece on September 28, 2020, which underscored Greece's importance to the United States as a geostrategic partner in the Eastern Mediterranean and Balkans and as an important NATO ally; and

WHEREAS, in support of the "Greece 2021" Committee established by the government of Greece, the United States Mission in Greece has launched a campaign to celebrate the bicentennial of Greek Independence and the 200 years of friendship between the United States and Greece; and

WHEREAS, it is proper and fitting that the United States celebrate this anniversary with the Greek people and reaffirm the democratic principles from which our 2 great nations were born; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Thirtieth Legislature, now assembled in the First Special Session, on behalf of the people we represent, take this opportunity to celebrate March 25, 2021 as the 200th Anniversary of Greek Independence, and we reaffirm Maine's abiding commitment to the principles of democracy and religious tolerance.