

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD

TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-FIVE

**JOINT RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIFE AND WORK OF
FREDERICK DOUGLASS**

WHEREAS, Frederick Douglass was born Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey into slavery in February 1818 in Talbot County, Maryland. As a young man, while still enslaved, Frederick taught himself how to read and write. At 15, he educated other enslaved individuals and attempted to gain his freedom through fighting back against a "slave-breaker," but was unsuccessful. His enslaver then sent him back to Baltimore, where he met a young free black woman named Anna Murray. Murray would later become his wife, and she risked her own security to buy Douglass the train ticket that brought him to freedom in New York City; and

WHEREAS, in the same year that Douglass got his freedom, he married Anna Murray. To get further away from the danger of re-enslavement, they moved to New Bedford, Massachusetts, adopting the last name Douglass. It was here that Douglass began addressing abolitionist meetings and quickly gained a reputation as an orator. He was soon being paid to speak by the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, which took him on speaking tours across the North and Midwest. His fame as a speaker increased, and so did the risk of his being caught and re-enslaved, especially after 1845, when he published his first autobiography detailing his time as a slave. In order to avoid this danger, he took his tour overseas to England, Ireland and Scotland for 2 years, until abolitionists bought his freedom, which allowed him to return back to the United States as a legally free man; and

WHEREAS, after his return to the United States, he continued his work by helping those on the Underground Railroad, supporting anti-slavery political parties and, during the Civil War, helping to ensure that emancipation would be the outcome of the war, even meeting with President Lincoln to advocate on the behalf of black troops who were not receiving the same pay and treatment as white troops. He also ran his own newspaper, The North Star, and in 1855 published his second autobiography; and

WHEREAS, after the end of Reconstruction, Douglass served under five presidents as United States Marshal for the District of Columbia from 1877 to 1881, the district's Recorder of Deeds from 1881 to 1886 and Minister Resident and Consul General to Haiti from 1889 to 1891. In addition to his federal work, Douglass continued on a speaking tour schedule giving speeches for racial equality and women's rights; and

WHEREAS, Douglass's speaking engagements also brought him to Maine multiple times, both before and after the Civil War. He spoke in Bangor and Waterville in 1855, Augusta in 1857, Waterville again in 1864 and Lewiston in 1873. Douglass came to Maine in 1877 as a guest of the veterans of the First Maine Cavalry, a famous Civil War unit, at their annual reunion in Old Orchard Beach. He appreciated the progress made on race relations that enabled him to enjoy "a game of croquet with ladies and gentlemen of a different race right out in front of the hotel"; and

WHEREAS, Douglass also maintained a lifelong friendship with the founder and first president of Bates College, Oren Cheney, who was a fellow abolitionist and activist, and used his home as a stop for the Underground Railroad, helping those escaping slavery reach Canada; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That We, the members of the One Hundred and Thirty-second Legislature now assembled in the First Regular Session, on behalf of the people we represent, take this occasion to honor the life and work of Frederick Douglass.