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JOINT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING MAY 2009 AS LUPUS AWARENESS MONTH

WHEREAS, systemic lupus erythematosus, commonly known as lupus, is an immune system disorder of unknown cause and in its systemic form may affect the joints, skin and one or more internal organs, such as the kidney, heart and brain; and

WHEREAS, lupus is a chronic, complex and life-threatening disease, in which there is always the potential threat of serious illness and disability, and while lupus can occur in men, 90% of the sufferers are women in their childbearing years, with African-American women, Native American women and women of Asian descent particularly affected; and

WHEREAS, ordinarily, the immune system protects against infection by producing antibodies that successfully combat foreign infectious agents, but in people with lupus, the immune system produces antibodies that can harm the individual's own tissues; and

WHEREAS, people with lupus have many different symptoms, but the most common are fatigue, muscle and joint pain, skin disorders, and inflammation of internal organs and inflammation of the vascular and nervous system. Early detection and proper treatment is critical to the quality of life and survival rate of lupus sufferers; and

WHEREAS, researchers estimate that over 1,500,000 people in the United States have been diagnosed with a form lupus or related diseases and approximately 100,000 new cases are diagnosed each year; and

WHEREAS, to fight lupus, new research and new approaches to diagnosis and treatment are needed and the alleviation of the suffering of lupus victims can be achieved through patient services and the promotion of early detection of undiagnosed cases through lupus awareness programs; and

WHEREAS, scientists in biology, biochemistry, immunology, genetics and other fields are seeking to understand the causes of lupus and to develop better means of detection, treatment and prevention; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Twenty-fourth Legislature now assembled in the First Regular Session, on behalf of the people we represent, recognize that May 2009 is Lupus Awareness Month in order to make our citizens more aware of this prevalent disease; and be it further

RESOLVED: That suitable copies of this resolution, duly authenticated by the Secretary of State, be transmitted to the Governor of Maine, the Honorable John E. Baldacci, and to the Department of Health and Human Services.