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## **JOINT RESOLUTION IN RECOGNITION OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS THAT WOMEN MAKE TO MAINE AND TO THE UNITED STATES**

**WHEREAS**, American women of every race, class and ethnic background have made historic contributions to the growth and strength of our nation in countless recorded and unrecorded ways, especially in the areas of political and social change; and

**WHEREAS**, the United States boasts a rich history of women whose vast and courageous achievements speak to the sense of excellence and potential shared by all Americans; and

**WHEREAS**, our country would not have attained its greatness without the strength, bravery, insight and persistence of the women who have come before us; and

**WHEREAS**, American women have played, and continue to play, critical economic, cultural, political and social roles in every sphere of the life of the nation by constituting a significant portion of the labor force working inside and outside of the home and in professions from educator to astronaut; and

**WHEREAS**, women have played a major role in the defense of our nation, both on and off the battlefield; and

**WHEREAS**, American women have been leaders, not only in securing their own rights of suffrage and equal opportunity but also in the abolitionist movement, the emancipation movement, the industrial labor movement, the civil rights movement and other movements that create a more fair and just society for all; and

**WHEREAS**, women not only have played critical economic, cultural and social roles in our society but also have permanently changed the face of American government and politics; and

**WHEREAS**, Maine has a rich and vibrant history of women in leadership, including former Senator Margaret Chase Smith, perhaps best known for her contribution to the well-being of the United States and its people with her consistent stand for the condemnation of bigotry and injustice wherever she found them; and

**WHEREAS**, Senator Margaret Chase Smith was the first woman from Maine to serve in the United States Congress, the first woman in the nation elected to both houses of the United States Congress and the first woman to be placed in nomination for the presidency at a major party's convention; and

**WHEREAS**, the Maine Legislature has had several women elected to leadership positions, including the Honorable Elizabeth "Libby" Mitchell, the first woman in the United States to have been chosen as both House Speaker and Senate President, the 2nd-highest political position in the State, and the Honorable Betheda "Beth" Edmonds, the 2nd female Senate President in Maine history and the first to serve a 2nd term as Senate President, and the Honorable Hannah Pingree, the youngest woman to hold the position of House Speaker; and

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**WHEREAS,** Maine currently has some of the strongest women leaders in the nation, including Senator Olympia J. Snowe, the first woman to serve in both houses of a state legislature and both houses of the United States Congress, Senator Susan Collins, the first woman to run for Maine Governor from a major party and Congresswoman Chellie Pingree, the first woman elected to Congress from Maine's First Congressional District; and

**WHEREAS,** within our state judicial system, Chief Justice Leigh I. Saufley is Maine's first woman Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court; and

**WHEREAS,** the Honorable Janet T. Mills is the first woman to have served as Maine's Attorney General, as well as being a former District Attorney and Legislator; and

**WHEREAS,** we must take every action possible to promote women in leadership so that we can achieve fair representation in our State Government, including recognizing Maine women's contributions to our state history; and

**WHEREAS,** in recognition of the contributions of women, the United States Congress has passed a resolution each year since 1987 designating the month of March as "Women's History Month"; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED:** That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Legislature now assembled in the Second Regular Session, on behalf of the people we represent, take this opportunity to recognize March 2012 as Women's History Month in Maine; and be it further

**RESOLVED:** That we encourage the residents of this State to observe Women's History Month by participating in programs, ceremonies and activities to foster an awareness of and appreciation for the contributions made by women that have benefited and improved society.