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## **JOINT RESOLUTION COMMEMORATING THE FIRST STRIKE OVER WORKING CONDITIONS IN WHAT WOULD BECOME THE UNITED STATES**

**WHEREAS**, Richmond Island, Maine, a small 226-acre island off the coast of Cape Elizabeth in Saco Bay, was the site of a permanent colonial fishing post owned by English merchant Robert Trelawny between 1633 and 1643; and

**WHEREAS**, Richmond Island has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1978 for the significance of the fishing post's archaeological remains; and

**WHEREAS**, Robert Trelawny's fishing post employed between 40 and 60 fishermen, artisans, servants and farmers to support its operation exporting dried fish, cod liver oil, pipe staves and beaver skins to Europe; and

**WHEREAS**, workers on Richmond Island were bonded by their employer and forced to work off their debts before they could earn enough money to live independent lives; and

**WHEREAS**, fishermen at the Richmond Island post often risked their lives on stormy seas in 20-foot vessels with minimal shelter from the elements and worked long hours, day and night, 6 days a week, to the point of exhaustion; and

**WHEREAS**, in the spring of 1636, fishermen at the Richmond Island post ceased working and left the island to protest the withholding of their wages for over a year, marking the first labor strike over working conditions in what would become the United States of America; and

**WHEREAS**, the collective action of the Richmond Island fishermen in standing up for their rights to dignity and fair treatment is an inspiration to all Maine workers; and

**WHEREAS**, the Richmond Island strike deserves to be honored and remembered as part of Maine's long and proud tradition of working class struggles in this year of our bicentennial celebrations; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED:** That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Twenty-ninth Legislature now assembled in the Second Regular Session, on behalf of the people we represent, take this opportunity to recognize and honor the courage and resolve of the Richmond Island fishermen in furthering the cause of workers' rights.