

STATE OF MAINE

—
**IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
TWO THOUSAND AND FIFTEEN**
—

**JOINT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE MARCH FROM SELMA TO MONTGOMERY**

WHEREAS, March 25, 2015 marks the 50th anniversary of the end of the 3rd of 3 marches from Selma, Alabama to Montgomery, Alabama in support of the voting rights movement, which in turn contributed to passage of the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965, a landmark achievement of the civil rights movement in the 1960s; and

WHEREAS, on March 7, 1965 approximately 600 civil rights marchers, led by John Lewis of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, who is now a member of the United States House of Representatives, and Reverend Hosea Williams of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, headed east out of Selma, Alabama to the State Capitol in Montgomery, Alabama; and

WHEREAS, the civil rights activists sought to nonviolently protest discriminatory voter registration practices and the shooting of Jimmie Lee Jackson, who was shot after protecting his mother and grandfather in a civil rights demonstration on February 18, 1965 in a restaurant in Marion, Alabama and who died 8 days later on February 26, 1965; and

WHEREAS, the nonviolent marchers were met and attacked with clubs, whips, police dogs and tear gas by state troopers, local law enforcement officers and townspeople at the Edmund Pettus Bridge as they were leaving Selma; and

WHEREAS, dozens of peaceful marchers were injured by state troopers, local law enforcement officers and townspeople in the forced retreat; and

WHEREAS, images of innocent protestors brutally beaten and severely injured on March 7, 1965, remembered as "Bloody Sunday," were depicted on television screens and in newspaper articles across the country; and

WHEREAS, Bloody Sunday galvanized a generation of nonviolent civil rights activists and heightened support and awareness for the civil rights movement; and

WHEREAS, on March 9, 1965, 2 days later, Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., led a nonviolent protest of reportedly as many as 2,500 people before turning around after crossing the Edmund Pettus Bridge due to a barricade of state troopers; and

WHEREAS, on March 15, 1965, despite pressure from political figures, United States District Court Judge Frank M. Johnson, Jr., issued an injunction allowing the voting rights march from Selma to Montgomery to proceed, overturning Governor George Wallace's prohibition of the protest; and

WHEREAS, on March 21, 1965, with the protection of United States Army troops, the Alabama National Guard under federal command, the FBI and federal marshals, more than 3,000

people, led by Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., set out from Selma to Montgomery, a 54-mile journey, marching an average of 10 miles a day along Route 80 and sleeping in fields; and

WHEREAS, the nonviolent protestors safely reached the steps of the State Capitol building on March 25, 1965, at which point their numbers had grown to 25,000, including many religious and community leaders of all denominations, races and backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, on March 17, 1965, with the Selma protestors at the forefront of the news, President Lyndon B. Johnson addressed a joint session of Congress, calling for federal voting rights legislation to dismantle the barriers that prevented African Americans from voting; and

WHEREAS, with the country captivated by the courage and conviction displayed by the civil rights marchers and activists, the United States Congress passed and President Lyndon B. Johnson enacted into law the landmark Voting Rights Act of 1965 on August 6, 1965; and

WHEREAS, many people from Maine, of all races and religions, were involved in not only the march from Selma to Montgomery, but the civil rights struggle as well; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Twenty-seventh Legislature now assembled in the First Regular Session, on behalf of the people we represent, take this opportunity to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the historic civil rights marches from Selma to Montgomery and to honor all those who struggled in search of equality and the freedom to participate in our democracy.