

STATE OF MAINE

—
IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-ONE

—
H.P. 1057 - L.D. 1441

**An Act To Create a James Weldon Johnson Annual Observance Day and an
Observance Task Force**

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 1 MRSA §150-Q is enacted to read:

§150-Q. James Weldon Johnson Day

The Governor shall annually issue a proclamation designating June 17th of each year as James Weldon Johnson Day in honor of writer and civil rights activist James Weldon Johnson.

Sec. 2. James Weldon Johnson observance task force established. The Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous and Maine Tribal Populations, established under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 5, section 25001, shall establish a James Weldon Johnson observance task force, referred to in this section as "the task force."

1. Membership. Membership of the task force may include representatives of:

- A. The Town of Wiscasset;
- B. A civil rights organization whose primary mission is racial justice;
- C. Historical societies;
- D. Scholars whose disciplines are in African-American history and culture;
- E. Literary societies;
- F. The Maine State Archives;
- G. The Maine State Museum;
- H. Regional and national efforts engaged in memorializing James Weldon Johnson;
- I. Creative writing programs;
- J. Educators; and

K. Other groups that the Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous and Maine Tribal Populations determines will help the task force in its work.

2. Duties. The task force shall:

- A. Develop methods to educate the public on James Weldon Johnson's life and legacy in order to continue his work to end systemic racism;
- B. Study models for formally observing and promoting figures of importance;
- C. Connect with local, regional and national efforts that honor James Weldon Johnson; and
- D. Explore opportunities for memorializing James Weldon Johnson's life such as a creative writing scholarship, annual events and programs, sister state and city relationships, a walking trail, a geographical marker and links to cultural tourism.

3. Funding. The Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous and Maine Tribal Populations may raise outside funds in order to fund the task force and is not required to convene the task force if sufficient funds are not secured.

4. Report. The Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous and Maine Tribal Populations shall submit an interim report to the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government no later than January 15, 2022 that includes the status of the task force and a timeline for its work, including a date for a final report to the committee if funding has been secured by the commission.