



THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN MAINE

Loring House

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Senator Daughtry, Representative Brennan and Members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, it is my pleasure to offer this testimony in support of LD 440 – An Act to Conserve the Frances Perkins Homestead National Historic Landmark on behalf of the Episcopal Diocese of Maine.

Frances Perkins, FDR's Secretary of Labor and the first woman to serve as a cabinet secretary, was the principal architect of the New Deal, following the nation's most serious economic crisis and helped to create the modern middle class. Many believe she was the woman behind the New Deal.

Frances Perkins was born Fannie Coralie Perkins in Boston in 1880, but her roots were in Maine. Fanny, as she was known to the family, spent her childhood summers with her grandmother on the farm in Newcastle, Maine. Her life would take her far beyond the humble Maine farm, but it is there that she returned year after year for rest and renewal.


In June of 1905, she was confirmed in the Episcopal faith. The Episcopal Church, and her belief in the need to make the Kingdom of God in this world, would be a source of strength and commitment throughout her life. For the next 60 years, she derived inspiration, solace, and courage from worship and contemplation to carry out her work and to face her personal struggles. She was a profoundly spiritual woman who constantly sought God's guidance to help give every person in America, as she said, 'the best possible life.'"

Former US Labor Secretary Tom Perez said, "She is one of the most extraordinary women in American history, and a guiding light for us as we work to expand opportunity for all." It seems more than fitting that this legislation help to preserve her memory for generations to come.

Frances Perkins suffered a stroke and died at Midtown Hospital in New York City on May 14, 1965, at the age of 85. She is buried alongside her husband, Paul Wilson, in the Glidden Cemetery on the River Road in Newcastle, Maine, the place she always considered her home.

It is our honor to share the legacy of Frances Perkins with the world and respectfully request your support of this legislation.

Respectfully submitted,


John Hennessy,
Director of Advocacy & Networks