

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD

TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-THREE

**JOINT RESOLUTION TO RECOGNIZE THE LIVES AND
ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF BLACK MAINE CITIZENS REUBEN
RUBY, GEORGE THOMPSON RUBY, MARY DALY DICKSON
AND LOIS ANN DICKSON RICE DURING BLACK HISTORY
MONTH**

WHEREAS, Maine's Black history and the story of Maine's Black citizens and their accomplishments and contributions are barely remembered today; and

WHEREAS, Reuben Ruby, a Black man, was born in Gray in 1798; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Ruby was the first person in the State to have a taxi, then known as a "hack," and one of his riders was William Lloyd Garrison, who was given a tour of Portland by Mr. Ruby before the Boston abolitionist joined Portland's Black leaders at Mr. Ruby's home for dinner; and

WHEREAS, in the place where Mr. Ruby's hack stand was located, on the corner of Temple Street and Federal Street, there is placed, as part of the Portland Freedom Trail, a stone monument recognizing the business; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Ruby was only 29 years of age when he became an agent for Freedom's Journal, the first Black-owned newspaper in the country. In October 1834, he was the only Black person among those representing the City of Portland at the forming of the Maine Anti-Slavery Society in Augusta; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Ruby was one of 2 Black persons sent to represent Maine at the Fifth Annual Convention for the Improvement of the Free People of Color, held in Philadelphia in 1835. The convention elected Mr. Ruby as its president; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Ruby was elected a vice-president of the American Moral Reform Society, a national group led by James Forten, a Black abolitionist from Philadelphia. In 1840, Mr. Ruby was elected president of the Manhattan Anti-Slavery Society in New York City; and

WHEREAS, Reuben Ruby's son, George Thompson Ruby, was the first Black graduate of Portland High School; and

WHEREAS, George Thompson Ruby was elected to the Texas state Senate during Reconstruction and was a delegate to the 1868 Republican National Convention in Chicago and the party's convention in Philadelphia 4 years later; and

WHEREAS, Lois Ann Dickson Rice, a Black woman, was born in Portland and went on to become valedictorian at Portland High School in 1950 and class president of Radcliffe College in 1954. She became national vice president of the College Board and is considered "the Mother of the Pell Grant," a federal financial aid program that benefits millions of students each year; and

WHEREAS, in 1950, her mother, Mary Daly Dickson, was named Maine Mother of the Year, becoming the first Black woman to gain that honor; and

WHEREAS, Lois Ann Dickson Rice's legacy of achievement continues in her daughter Susan Rice, who was United States Ambassador to the United Nations and then National Security Advisor in the administration of President Barack Obama and has been tapped to run the Domestic Policy Council under President Joe Biden; and

WHEREAS, Maine's Black citizens have a long history of accomplishments that should be remembered and celebrated; and

WHEREAS, from the Revolutionary War through the abolitionist movement, to marches from Selma to Montgomery and across America today, and in this State, African Americans in Maine have remained devoted to the proposition that all of us are created equal, even when their own rights were denied; and

WHEREAS, the month of February is officially celebrated as Black History Month, which dates back to 1926 when Dr. Carter G. Woodson set aside a special period of time in February to recognize the heritage and achievements of African Americans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Thirty-first Legislature now assembled in the First Regular Session, on behalf of the people we represent, take this opportunity to honor during Black History Month the contributions of African Americans in Maine's and the nation's history and encourage all people in the State to learn more about the past and to better understand the experiences that have shaped the State and the nation.