

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD

TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-THREE

**JOINT RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIFE OF JUDITH
HEUMANN**

WHEREAS, Judith "Judy" Heumann, widely regarded as the mother of the disability rights movement, died in Washington, D.C. on March 4, 2023; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Heumann contracted polio in 1949, when she was 18 months old, and lived her life in a wheelchair; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Heumann's parents refused to institutionalize her, instead fighting discriminatory policies and securing her a place in public school classrooms; and

WHEREAS, as a young woman, Ms. Heumann continued that fight, earning a bachelor of arts degree from Long Island University, and after winning a discrimination suit against the New York Board of Education, becoming the first teacher in the state to use a wheelchair; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Heumann put herself at the forefront of major disability rights demonstrations, advocating for the rights of persons with disabilities, and became an organizer, cofounding the protest group Disabled in Action; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Heumann worked to create support for the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and later was a leader in the effort to force the Carter administration to implement Section 504 of that Act, which specifies that no government agency or private business that accepts federal funds may discriminate against someone on the basis of disability; and

WHEREAS, Section 504 became the model for the federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and Ms. Heumann was a leader in the effort to pass that legislation; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Heumann founded national and international disability advocacy organizations and served her country as an Assistant Secretary of Education in the Clinton administration, overseeing the nation's federal education programs for students with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, during the Obama administration, Ms. Heumann worked in the State Department, advocating for civil rights across the world, and 181 countries passed disability civil rights modeled after the federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 between 2000 and 2015; and

WHEREAS, she coauthored her memoir, "Being Heumann: An Unrepentant Memoir of a Disability Rights Activist," and its young adult version, "Rolling Warrior: The Incredible, Sometimes Awkward, True Story of a Rebel Girl on Wheels Who Helped Spark a Revolution," and was featured in the Oscar-nominated documentary film "Crip Camp: A Disability Revolution"; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That We, the members of the One Hundred and Thirty-first Legislature now assembled in the First Special Session, take this occasion to recognize the life of Judith

Heumann, whose life's work helped to improve the lives of millions of Americans and who led a reimagining of what it means to be disabled in this country and across the world.