

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION

No. 180

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JULY 23, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman BENJIE E. WIMBERLY

District 35 (Bergen and Passaic)

Assemblywoman VERLINA REYNOLDS-JACKSON

District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)

Assemblywoman ANNETTE QUIJANO

District 20 (Union)

Co-Sponsored by:

**Assemblymen Space, Wirths, Assemblywoman Vainieri Huttle,
Assemblymen Scharfenberger, McClellan, Simonsen, Holley and Tully**

SYNOPSIS

Designates February 14 of each year as Frederick Douglass Day in NJ.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 3/1/2021)

1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** designating February 14 of each year as
2 Frederick Douglass Day in New Jersey.
3
4 **WHEREAS**, Frederick Douglass, a renowned African-American
5 abolitionist, human rights activist, author, and public speaker, was
6 born into slavery in or around 1818 in Talbot County, Maryland;
7 and
8 **WHEREAS**, Frederick Douglass’ exact birthdate is unknown, but
9 during his lifetime he chose to celebrate his birth annually on
10 February 14; and
11 **WHEREAS**, Frederick Douglass spent a majority of his youth and
12 young adulthood as a slave when he experienced physical abuse,
13 cruelty, and received very minimal education; and
14 **WHEREAS**, Despite the challenges he faced, Frederick Douglass
15 learned how to read and write through self-education and later
16 began teaching other slaves how to read using the Bible; and
17 **WHEREAS**, After years of slavery and abuse, Frederick Douglass
18 escaped from slavery in 1838 at the age of 20; and
19 **WHEREAS**, After escaping from slavery, Frederick Douglass began
20 attending and giving speeches at abolitionist meetings; and
21 **WHEREAS**, Because of his activism and public speaking, Frederick
22 Douglass was chosen, in 1843, to become part of the American
23 Anti-Slavery Society’s Hundred Conventions Project, which was a
24 six-month tour across the United States; and
25 **WHEREAS**, Throughout this tour, Frederick Douglass shared his
26 experiences with slavery and spoke publically about the importance
27 of abolishing slavery and ensuring equality for all Americans; and
28 **WHEREAS**, Frederick Douglass continued to utilize his knowledge and
29 passion for the abolition of slavery to publish his own abolitionist
30 newsletter titled The North Star, which published articles on slavery
31 and other injustices; and
32 **WHEREAS**, Frederick Douglass became highly respected and served as
33 an advisor to Abraham Lincoln throughout the Civil War; and
34 **WHEREAS**, Even after slavery was abolished as a result of the
35 Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, Frederick Douglass continued
36 to fight tirelessly for the full-integration of African-Americans into
37 the political and economic life of the United States; and
38 **WHEREAS**, Because of his determination, passion for human rights,
39 and anti-slavery activism, Frederick Douglass was named the
40 “Father of the Civil Rights Movement”; and
41 **WHEREAS**, Frederick Douglass’ activism extended beyond the
42 abolition of slavery as he also became a leader in the movement for
43 women’s rights, fighting for equality and women’s suffrage; and
44 **WHEREAS**, In addition to Frederick Douglass’ accomplishments as an
45 activist, he also became the first African-American to hold high
46 office serving as an ambassador to the Dominican Republic, and
47 later being the first African-American to receive a vote for
48 President of the United States during the Republican National
49 Convention in 1888; and

1 **WHEREAS**, Frederick Douglass remained an active speaker, writer, and
2 human rights activist until his death in 1895; and

3 **WHEREAS**, Frederick Douglass dedicated his life to ensuring freedom
4 and equality for future generations of Americans and for this
5 reason, the remarkable life of Frederick Douglass should be
6 remembered and celebrated by all New Jersey residents; now,
7 therefore,

8
9 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*
10 *State of New Jersey:*

11
12 1. February 14 of each year is designated as “Frederick
13 Douglass Day” in New Jersey to honor the remarkable life of
14 Frederick Douglass, his accomplishments, and his activism.

15
16 2. The Governor is respectfully requested to annually issue a
17 proclamation calling upon public officials, private organizations,
18 and all citizens of the State to observe “Frederick Douglass Day”
19 with appropriate events and activities.

20
21 3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

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23

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STATEMENT

25

26 This joint resolution designates February 14 of each year as
27 Frederick Douglass Day in New Jersey.

28 Frederick Douglass was born into slavery in or around 1818 in
29 Talbot County, Maryland. From the age of 6 to the age of 20,
30 Frederick Douglass was a slave to multiple different slave owners.
31 While enslaved, Frederick Douglas was abused and received very
32 minimal education. Frederick Douglass learned to read and write
33 through self-education and soon began teaching other slaves how to
34 read using the Bible. After years of abuse and after multiple failed
35 attempts to escape, Frederick Douglass finally escaped from slavery
36 in 1838 and sought refuge in a safe house in New York.

37 Frederick Douglass became a famous abolitionist, human rights,
38 activist, writer, and speaker throughout the country recounting his
39 experiences as a slave, speaking out against injustices, and
40 supporting women’s rights. He became a leader of the abolitionist
41 movement, the first African-American member to attend the Seneca
42 Falls Convention for women’s rights, and an advisor to multiple
43 presidents on the subjects of slavery and black suffrage. Frederick
44 Douglass also authored multiple autobiographies throughout his
45 lifetime. The list of Frederick Douglass’ accomplishments is
46 extensive and his remarkable life should be remembered and
47 celebrated throughout the State of New Jersey.