

JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 3

A JOINT RESOLUTION designating February 14 of each year as Frederick Douglass Day in New Jersey.

WHEREAS, Frederick Douglass, a renowned African-American abolitionist, human rights activist, author, and public speaker, was born into slavery in or around 1818 in Talbot County, Maryland; and

WHEREAS, Frederick Douglass' exact birthdate is unknown, but during his lifetime he chose to celebrate his birth annually on February 14; and

WHEREAS, Frederick Douglass spent a majority of his youth and young adulthood as a slave when he experienced physical abuse, cruelty, and received very minimal education; and

WHEREAS, Despite the challenges he faced, Frederick Douglass learned how to read and write through self-education and later began teaching other slaves how to read using the Bible; and

WHEREAS, After years of slavery and abuse, Frederick Douglass escaped from slavery in 1838 at the age of 20; and

WHEREAS, After escaping from slavery, Frederick Douglass began attending and giving speeches at abolitionist meetings; and

WHEREAS, Because of his activism and public speaking, Frederick Douglass was chosen, in 1843, to become part of the American Anti-Slavery Society's Hundred Conventions Project, which was a six-month tour across the United States; and

WHEREAS, Throughout this tour, Frederick Douglass shared his experiences with slavery and spoke publically about the importance of abolishing slavery and ensuring equality for all Americans; and

WHEREAS, Frederick Douglass continued to utilize his knowledge and passion for the abolition of slavery to publish his own abolitionist newsletter titled The North Star, which published articles on slavery and other injustices; and

WHEREAS, Frederick Douglass became highly respected and served as an advisor to Abraham Lincoln throughout the Civil War; and

WHEREAS, Even after slavery was abolished as a result of the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, Frederick Douglass continued to fight tirelessly for the full-integration of African-Americans into the political and economic life of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Because of his determination, passion for human rights, and anti-slavery activism, Frederick Douglass was named the "Father of the Civil Rights Movement"; and

WHEREAS, Frederick Douglass' activism extended beyond the abolition of slavery as he also became a leader in the movement for women's rights, fighting for equality and women's suffrage; and

WHEREAS, In addition to Frederick Douglass' accomplishments as an activist, he also became the first African-American to hold high office serving as an ambassador to the Dominican Republic, and later being the first African-American to receive a vote for President of the United States during the Republican National Convention in 1888; and

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

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

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

C.36:2-406 “Frederick Douglass Day,” February 14; designated.

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

C.36:2-407 Annual observance.

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

3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

Approved April 19, 2021.