

**NBCSL Proclamation**

**HONORING THE LIFE AND MEMORY OF**

**JAMES WELDON JOHNSON**

**Duly proclaimed on December 3, 2020**

**By the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL)**

WHEREAS, James Weldon Johnson, born June 17, 1871 in Jacksonville, Florida unselfishly dedicated his entire life to the cause and service of the African American community of this great Nation with relentless distinction and success, died June 26, 1938 in Wiscasset, Maine;

WHEREAS, James Weldon Johnson, enriched this great Nation through his tireless public service as an Author, Activist, Educator, Lawyer and Diplomat;

WHEREAS, James Weldon Johnson, tireless activism and advocacy for African Americans of this great Nation suffering from acts of racism and segregation;

WHEREAS, James Weldon Johnson, in 1898 became the first African American attorney to be admitted to The Florida Bar;

WHEREAS, James Weldon Johnson, demonstrated the spirit of public service of this great Nation by penning the renowned Negro spiritual with his brother, John Rosamond Johnson, "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing" (1899) becoming known as the "Negro National Anthem";

WHEREAS, James Weldon Johnson, was appointed under the Honorable [Theodore D. Roosevelt](#), 32<sup>nd</sup> President of these United States of America as U.S. Consul to Puerto Cabello, Venezuela in 1906 and Corinto Nicaragua in 1909;

WHEREAS, James Weldon Johnson, in 1920 was the first African American of this great Nation to be chosen as the Chief Operating Officer of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and serving in that position from 1920 to 1930;

WHEREAS, James Weldon Johnson, in 1934 was the first [African American](#) Professor to be hired at [New York University](#) in New York City and also Professor of Creative Literature and Writing at [Fisk University](#), a historically black university in Nashville, Tennessee from 1931 to 1938;

WHEREAS, James Weldon Johnson, penned numerous books, poems, articles and essays about the suffrage and racism of the African American people during his lifetime and are widely circulated worldwide, the most notable are [The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man](#), [God's Trombones](#) and Along This Way; and

WHEREAS, James Weldon Johnson, in tireless advocacy of people of this great Nation received many awards and accolades from countries around the world.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) hereby honors the memory of James Weldon Johnson, for a life of outstanding service and extraordinary contributions to this great Nation;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the NBCSL supports the United States Highway 1 (US1) from the great State of Maine to the great State of Florida be renamed to the “LIFT EV’RY VOICE AND SING” Highway to reflect the achievements of James Weldon Johnson, and respect for one of this Nation’s finest citizens with our sincere appreciation; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, members of the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate, and other federal and state government officials and agencies as appropriate.

**Introduced by: Representative Billy Mitchell (GA)  
President, State Representative Gilda Cobb-Hunter (SC), President-Elect,  
Representative Billy Mitchell (GA)  
Vice President, Representative Laura Hall (AL) Treasurer, Senator Raumesh Akbari  
(TN) Secretary, Representative Rena Moran (TN)  
Financial Secretary, Representative Harold M. Love (TN) Chaplain, Senator Karla May  
(MO)**