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JOINT RESOLUTION TO HONOR ANDREW SOCKALEXIS

WHEREAS, Andrew Sockalexis, a Penobscot Indian, was the first runner in the State of Maine to make a mark on the national and international scene, and to this day he ranks among the greatest Maine runners of all time because of his notable placings in important races; and

WHEREAS, in 1912, Mr. Sockalexis was one of 123 starters in that year's Boston Marathon, finishing second, which earned him a spot on the United States Olympic team, where he was one of 12 American marathoners who ran in Stockholm; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Sockalexis, at the age of 20, was a member of the prestigious North Dorchester Athletic Club, from the greater Boston area, and he was widely regarded as a serious contender to win the marathon and one Boston newspaper columnist called him the favorite to win a gold medal; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Sockalexis, known for his smooth and effortless running style, felt he waited too long to pick up the pace and finished fourth in the marathon, still a major accomplishment and noteworthy achievement; and

WHEREAS, also in 1912, Mr. Sockalexis finished in second place to the great Clarence DeMar, a 7-time Boston Marathon winner, in a 19-mile race from Old Town, Maine to Bangor's Maplewood Park, now known as Bass Park; and

WHEREAS, he entered the Boston Marathon in 1913 and was considered one of the favorites to win, and he passed runner after runner, but could not close the gap to the leading runner and he placed second in that year's marathon; and

WHEREAS, it was in 1913 that Mr. Sockalexis first developed tuberculosis, or consumption as it was commonly known in that time, and he was sick for many years, dying at the age of 27 in South Paris, Maine in the summer of 1919; and

WHEREAS, Andrew Sockalexis was honored at his passing by the United States Olympic Committee with a headstone that was engraved "A Member of the American Olympic Team at the Fifth Olympiad held in Stockholm, Sweden in July, 1912"; and

WHEREAS, Andrew Sockalexis is a member of the charter class of the Maine Running Hall of Fame, established in 1989, and a member of the Maine Sports Hall of Fame as well as the American Indian Athletic Hall of Fame; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED: That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Twenty-fourth Legislature now assembled in the First Regular Session, on behalf of the people we represent, take this opportunity to recognize the memory of Andrew Sockalexis on the 90th anniversary of his untimely death, and to honor him as one of Maine's great athletes, who brought much pride to the Penobscot Nation and to all the people of Maine.