JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 5
(CORRECTED COPY OF CORRECTED COPY)

A JOINT RESOLUTION designating the month of March of each year as "Irish-American Heritage Month" in New Jersey and amending P.L.1997, J.R.2.

WHEREAS, Many Irish people emigrated from Ireland to the United States in search of better economic opportunities, political and religious freedom, and to escape famine, poverty, and oppression in their native land; and

WHEREAS, While emigration from Ireland has occurred throughout American history, the most well-known mass emigration from Ireland to the United States occurred in the mid-19th century during the Great Hunger, a period of mass starvation and disease in Ireland that occurred due to the failure of the potato crop; and

WHEREAS, The Irish resilience is legendary because despite being starved out of their land by the Great Hunger of the 1840s, the Irish people survived and prospered; and

WHEREAS, Many call that terrible period the Great Hunger and not the Great Famine as a famine suggests there was a lack of food to feed the hungry, but that was not the case, because while people were starving the government of the day exported record levels of livestock, grain, and food, turning a blind eye to the starving; and

WHEREAS, The failure of the crop was the impetus, but the failure to act by the English government was the reason for the levels of human suffering; and

WHEREAS, Despite often arriving destitute, Irish-Americans contributed significantly to the culture and economic growth of the United States by taking less desirable and often dangerous jobs, such as domestic work, farming, coal mining, and the building of roads, bridges, canals, and railroads; and

WHEREAS, There was a mass emigration of Irish to the United States in the years prior to the Civil War and an estimated 150,000 Irish immigrants served in the Union Army, with Irish units suffering casualties of over 40 percent at Fredericksburg and playing a key role in the defeat of Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg; and

WHEREAS, Through hard work and determination, Americans of Irish descent achieved social and occupational gains through the generations and became teachers, policemen, firemen, lawyers, authors, artists, business owners, athletes, soldiers, and politicians; and

WHEREAS, According to the United States Census, approximately 32 million Americans report having Irish ancestry and 1.3 million people in New Jersey claimed Irish heritage; and

WHEREAS, Notable Irish-Americans from New Jersey have influenced the United States and New Jersey, such as President Grover Cleveland, musician Bruce Springsteen, actors John Travolta and Anne Hathaway, professor and human rights activist Edward Neafsey, and United States Supreme Court Justice William J. Brennan; and

WHEREAS, March is a significant month in Irish-American history and culture because the feast of Saint Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, is celebrated on March 17 and the day is now recognized throughout the country and State as an occasion to celebrate Irish-American history and culture through parades and celebrations; and

WHEREAS, The week including March 17 is currently designated as "Irish-American History and Heritage Week" in New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, The State of New Jersey can recognize Irish-American contributions to the culture and economic growth of the United States and the State of New Jersey, acknowledge the historical struggles of Irish-Americans, and recognize individuals with Irish ancestry by designating the month of March as "Irish-American Heritage Month" in New Jersey; now, therefore,

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

1. Section 1 of P.L.1997, J.R.2 (C.36:2-43) is amended to read as follows:

C.36:2-43 Irish-American History and Heritage Week designated.

1. a. The week including March 17 of every year is designated as "Irish-American History and Heritage Week".

b. The month of March of each year is designated as "Irish-American Heritage Month" in the State of New Jersey to recognize and celebrate the contributions of Irish-Americans.

c. The Governor is respectfully requested to annually issue a proclamation recognizing "Irish-American History and Heritage Week" and "Irish-American Heritage Month" in New Jersey, and call upon public officials and citizens of this State to observe the day with appropriate activities and programs.

2. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

Approved September 15, 2022.