



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michelle Hinchey

Hinchey, Shrestha Bill to Establish November 26th as Sojourner Truth Day Signed into Law

MICHELLE HINCHEY November 26, 2024



Asm. Sarahana Shrestha, Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger, Sen. Michelle Hinchey, Dr. Weldon McWilliams, Barbara Allen - 6th Generation Descendent of Sojourner Truth, Briana Gary and Aleshanee Emanuel, Ulster County Chief Diversity Officer Esi Lewis.

Sojourner Truth Day to be Celebrated Annually in New York, Honoring Hudson Valley-born Abolitionist and Women's Rights Activist

KINGSTON, NY – Legislation introduced by Senator Michelle Hinchey and Assemblymember Sarahana Shrestha, designating November 26th as Sojourner Truth Day in New York, has been signed into law. This measure is the first permanent statewide recognition of Truth's

legacy as one of the most renowned abolitionists and social activists of her era—an idea sparked in 2021 by students from the Kingston YMCA Farm Project Youth Crew, who brought their vision to Hinchey's office. Since its introduction, the bill has inspired widespread support over the years, leading to local and county-level tributes to Truth's enduring contributions.

Senator Michelle Hinchey said, "Sojourner Truth was an American hero whose unyielding fight for freedom and equality continues to inspire us nearly 200 years after her passing, igniting a new generation of young leaders carrying her legacy forward—including here in Ulster County, Truth's birthplace. Our bill to establish Sojourner Truth Day in New York began with students from the Kingston YMCA Youth Crew, who recognized our responsibility in New York State to share her journey as one of the most prolific abolitionists and women's rights activists of the time. Turning this vision into law is an honor, and I thank Assemblymember Shrestha for her partnership and Governor Hochul for signing our bill into law. For New York, November 26th of each year will not only reflect our commitment to keeping Sojourner Truth's legacy alive but reaffirm what it means to be a New Yorker: always striving toward a better, more equitable future for all."

Assemblymember Sarahana Shrestha said, "Sojourner Truth didn't stop when she became the first Black woman to successfully sue white men to get her son released from slavery—she went on to spend the rest of her life fighting for everyone else across the country. Her determination is a reminder that those who commit to dismantling systems of oppression and injustice seldom do it because someone told them it was going to be easy. They do it precisely because it's difficult, and precisely because it's up to everyday people like Truth and her abolitionist peers were at the time, to lay the groundwork for making the impossible possible. I'm thrilled to have worked with Senator Hinchey and Governor Hochul to establish November 26th as Sojourner Truth Day in the State of New York, and look forward

to honoring Truth's work every year."

Sojourner Truth was an Ulster County-born abolitionist who freed herself from slavery with her infant daughter in 1826 and dedicated the remainder of her life to fighting for equality, gaining national prominence as one of the best-known social activists of her generation. Throughout her life, Truth's efforts were critical in the fight to secure the right to vote for all women and expand access to government support for formerly enslaved Black Americans. In 1828, Truth made history as the first Black woman to successfully sue a white man, securing her son's freedom in a landmark case heard at the Ulster County Courthouse in Kingston, New York, where Hinchey and Shrestha announced the signing of their bill on Tuesday.

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