



Office of the City Clerk

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Legislation Text

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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

CITY OF CHICAGO

LORI F. LIGHTFOOT

June 17, 2020

TO THE HONORABLE, THE CITY COUNCIL
OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I transmit herewith, together with Aldermen Hadden, Hopkins, Dowell, King, Hairston, Sawyer, Mitchell, Harris, Beale, Coleman, Moore, Curtis, Brookins, Taylor, Scott, Burnett, Ervin, Taliaferro, Mitts, Martin and Osterman a resolution celebrating "Juneteenth."

Your favorable consideration of this resolution will be appreciated.

Very truly yours:

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Juneteenth is the oldest recognized celebration observing the freedom of African-Americans from slavery in the United States. Juneteenth is a historic milestone reminding Americans of the triumph of the human spirit over the harshness of slavery and the basic civil right of freedom and equality for all; and

WHEREAS, The celebration honors those 11 Vz million African-Americans who survived, in chains, the voyage to the Americas as well as the millions that did not survive. For more than 200 years, the enslaved were stripped of their humanity by forced family separation, rape, branding, whipping, mutilation, and death; and

WHEREAS, The Emancipation Proclamation was issued on September 22, 1862, with an effective date

of January 1, 1863, but it had minimal immediate effect on the majority of enslaved people who remained in captivity and oppression by slave owners; and

WHEREAS, On June 19, 1865, Union General Gordon Granger and 2,000 federal troops arrived in Confederate-controlled Texas to take possession of the state and to enforce the emancipation of enslaved people throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, Two years, five months, and eighteen days after President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, the last of those enslaved within the borders of the United States were freed; and

WHEREAS, The word "Juneteenth" became the name for the joyous celebration of freedom from slavery as a result of the words "June Nineteenth" combined together in speech; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth is celebrated in more than 205 American cities and is officially recognized by 46 states including our state of Illinois, and the U.S. territories such as Puerto Rico and Guam; and

WHEREAS, It is not enough for the City of Chicago to just have parades, barbeques, and events celebrating Juneteenth. Chicago must support the campaign to recognize "Juneteenth National Freedom Day" on a national level; and

WHEREAS, Chicago, a city to which millions of African-Americans fled in two great migration waves, served as a refuge from terrorism; and

WHEREAS, Chicago is a place where millions of African-Americans never succumb to despair or cynicism and have always believed they could write their own destiny. It is from our many Chicago neighborhoods that African-Americans pursued personal and professional endeavors while building a community embodying the spirit of their ancestry; and

WHEREAS, From those battered bodies and souls, African-Americans, through blood, sweat, and tears, have shaped the face of Chicago. Despite segregation and denial of fundamental rights, Chicago's politics, entertainment, sports, and civic life have all been impacted by the strength and heart of these descendants of enslaved people. Chicago's DNA would be incomplete without the contributions of African-Americans; and

WHEREAS, Chicago, a city founded by Jean Baptiste Point du Sable, an African descendant; the home of Barack Obama, the first African-American President; and now led by its first

African-American, lesbian, mayor can serve as a symbol and vessel that pushes this campaign forward; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That the City Council of the City of Chicago recognizes the value, sacrifice, and contributions the African-American community has made to this city and will commit to publicly and widely recognizing the great significance of June 19th every year, and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City Council of the City of Chicago designates June 19 of each year as a day of observance to reflect on the suffering endured by early African-Americans, promote public awareness, and celebrate African-American freedom and achievement.

CITY OF CHICAGO

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OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK ANNA M. VALENCIA

Chicago City Council Co-Sponsor Form

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(Signature)

(Signature) Principal Sponsor

Ward) Ward)

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Final Copies To Be Filed With: • Chairman of Committee to which legislation was referred
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