

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 152 Session of 2023

INTRODUCED BY BULLOCK, KINSEY, N. NELSON, PARKER, SMITH-WADE-EL, KHAN, KRAJEWSKI, MAYES, YOUNG, ABNEY, BELLMON, A. BROWN, BURGOS, CEPEDA-FREYTIZ, CEPHAS, CURRY, DAWKINS, FLEMING, GIRAL, GREEN, GUZMAN, HARRIS, HILL-EVANS, KAZEEM, KENYATTA, KIM, MADSEN, McCLINTON, RABB, SCOTT, VENKAT, D. WILLIAMS, SANCHEZ, VITALI, MERSKI, HADDOCK, MADDEN, D. MILLER, HOHENSTEIN, BOROWSKI AND SAMUELSON, JUNE 14, 2023

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, JUNE 14, 2023

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing June 19, 2023, as "Juneteenth Independence Day" in
 2 Pennsylvania in recognition of June 19, 1865, the date on
 3 which slavery was abolished finally in all regions of the
 4 United States.

5 WHEREAS, For 154 years, Americans of African descent have
 6 celebrated June 19 as "Juneteenth Independence Day" or
 7 "Juneteenth National Freedom Day" in recognition of the human
 8 struggles of their enslaved descendants; and

9 WHEREAS, According to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade
 10 Database, between 1525 and 1866, the duration of the
 11 transatlantic slave trade to the Americas, an estimated 12.5
 12 million men, women and children were captured and forcibly
 13 transported in bondage from their African homelands to the
 14 Americas; and

15 WHEREAS, An estimated 10.7 million Africans, mostly from the
 16 Congo, Nigeria, Angola and Senegambia, survived the hazardous

1 Middle Passage and disembarked in North America, the Caribbean
2 and South America; and

3 WHEREAS, History characterizes the transatlantic slave trade
4 as a brutal and horrific commercial and economic enterprise and
5 the enslavement of Africans as cruel, exploitative and
6 dehumanizing; and

7 WHEREAS, Lasting for nearly four centuries, the transatlantic
8 slave trade represents one of the longest and most sustained
9 assaults on the life, integrity and dignity of human beings in
10 history and one of the greatest tragedies in the history of
11 humanity; and

12 WHEREAS, With the enactment of the Act to Prohibit the
13 Importation of Slaves of 1807, the United States outlawed the
14 transatlantic slave trade in 1808; and

15 WHEREAS, Although the 1807 Federal legislation ended the
16 legality of the transatlantic slave trade in the United States,
17 the law was not universally enforced; and

18 WHEREAS, Enslaved Africans continued to be smuggled into the
19 United States and the domestic slave trade was not affected; and

20 WHEREAS, On January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued
21 the Emancipation Proclamation, which proclaimed all enslaved
22 Africans to be free; and

23 WHEREAS, News of the Emancipation Proclamation did not reach
24 the frontier, in particular the State of Texas and the other
25 southwestern states, until Union troops, commanded by Major
26 General Gordon Granger, arrived in Galveston, Texas, on June 19,
27 1865; and

28 WHEREAS, On that day in Galveston, more than two years after
29 President Lincoln issued his Emancipation Proclamation, Major
30 General Granger announced the end of the Civil War and issued

1 General Order No.3, which proclaimed all slaves to be free,
2 including absolute equality in personal rights; and

3 WHEREAS, Slavery as an institution was not officially
4 abolished until the ratification of the 13th Amendment to the
5 Constitution of the United States on December 6, 1865; and

6 WHEREAS, On June 18, 2020, H.R. 7232, the Juneteenth National
7 Independence Day Act, was introduced and reintroduced as H.R.
8 1320 on February 25, 2021, in the House of Representatives,
9 marking the first time in Congress a bill had been introduced to
10 declare Juneteenth a Federal holiday; and

11 WHEREAS, On June 17, 2021, President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.,
12 signed into law the bill that established Juneteenth as a
13 Federal holiday, one day before the first anniversary of the
14 introduction of H.R. 7232, making it the most recent addition to
15 the list of Federal holidays; and

16 WHEREAS, The faith and strength of character demonstrated by
17 former slaves remains an example for all people of the United
18 States, regardless of background, religion or race; and

19 WHEREAS, People nationwide join together to celebrate June 19
20 as "Juneteenth Independence Day" in recognition of the end of
21 slavery in all regions of the United States and to commemorate
22 the survival and determination of African men, women and
23 children who survived the monthlong journeys across the Atlantic
24 Ocean, also known as the Middle Passage, and debarked to a life
25 as slaves; and

26 WHEREAS, The faith, courage and strength of character
27 demonstrated by former slaves and the descendants of former
28 slaves remain an example for all people of the United States;
29 and

30 WHEREAS, The United States is the worldwide symbol of

1 democracy and freedom; therefore be it

2 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize June
3 19, 2023, as "Juneteenth Independence Day" in Pennsylvania in
4 recognition of June 19, 1865, the date on which slavery was
5 abolished finally in all regions of the United States; and be it
6 further

7 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives encourage
8 residents to observe "Juneteenth Independence Day" with
9 appropriate ceremonies, activities and programs; and be it
10 further

11 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives support the
12 continued celebration of "Juneteenth Independence Day" to
13 provide an opportunity for the residents of this Commonwealth to
14 learn more about the past and to better understand the
15 experiences that have shaped the nation.