

Introduced by Senator Huff

June 6, 2016

Senate Resolution No. 78—Relative to the 151st anniversary of Juneteenth.

1 WHEREAS, June 19, 2016, marks the 151st anniversary of
2 Juneteenth ; and

3 WHEREAS, Juneteenth, also known as “Juneteenth
4 Independence Day,” “Emancipation Day,” “Emancipation
5 Celebration,” and “Freedom Day,” is the oldest African American
6 holiday observance in the United States; and

7 WHEREAS, Juneteenth commemorates the strong survival
8 instinct of African Americans who were first brought to this
9 country stacked in the bottom of slave ships in a month-long
10 journey across the Atlantic Ocean known as the “Middle Passage”;
11 and

12 WHEREAS, Events in the history of the United States that led
13 to the start of the Civil War in 1861 centered on sectional
14 differences between the North and the South that were based on
15 the economic and social divergence caused by the existence of
16 slavery; and

17 WHEREAS, In 1862, the first clear signs that the end of slavery
18 was imminent appeared when laws abolishing slavery were adopted
19 in the territories of Oklahoma, Nebraska, Colorado, and New
20 Mexico; and

21 WHEREAS, In September 1862, President Lincoln issued the
22 celebrated Emancipation Proclamation, warning the rebellious
23 Confederate states that he would declare their slaves “forever free”
24 if those states did not return to the Union by January 1, 1863; and

1 WHEREAS, Enforcement of the Emancipation Proclamation
2 occurred only in Confederate states that were under Union Army
3 control; and

4 WHEREAS, On January 31, 1865, Congress passed the
5 Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution abolishing
6 slavery throughout the United States and its territories; and

7 WHEREAS, Spontaneous celebration erupted throughout the
8 country when African Americans learned of their freedom; and

9 WHEREAS, Juneteenth, or June 19, 1865, is considered the
10 date upon which the last slaves in America were freed when
11 General Gordon Granger rode into Galveston, Texas, and issued
12 General Order No. 3, almost two and one-half years after President
13 Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation; and

14 WHEREAS, Observance of Juneteenth, a reminder of
15 emancipation, spread from Texas to the neighboring states of
16 Louisiana, Arkansas, and Oklahoma, as well as Alabama, Florida,
17 and California where many African American Texans migrated;
18 and

19 WHEREAS, Juneteenth symbolizes freedom, celebrates the
20 abolishment of slavery, and reminds all Americans of the
21 significant contributions of African Americans to our society; and

22 WHEREAS, A growing number of American and African
23 American cultural institutions have sponsored Juneteenth cultural
24 events designed to make all Americans aware of this celebration;
25 and

26 WHEREAS, Juneteenth celebrations are a tribute to those
27 African Americans who fought so long and worked so hard to
28 make the dream of equality a reality; now, therefore, be it

29 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California*, That June 19,
30 2016, is hereby recognized, as the 151st anniversary of Juneteenth;
31 and be it further

32 *Resolved*, That the Senate urges the people of California to join
33 in celebrating Juneteenth as a day to honor and reflect on the
34 significant role that African Americans have played in the history
35 of the United States and how they have enriched society through
36 their steadfast commitment to promoting unity and equality; and
37 be it further

- 1 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
- 2 this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

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