Legislation Text

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Recognizing, honoring and commemorating Juneteenth in Philadelphia as the day when slaves were freed in the United States of America more than 150 years ago and further celebrating National Juneteenth Independence Day which is also known as Freedom Day on Friday, June 19, 2015.

WHEREAS, Juneteenth is the oldest, recognized celebration observing the freedom of African Americans from slavery in the United States. Juneteenth is an 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. The celebration honors our ancestors who survived the inhumane bondage and demonstrates the pride in their legacy of perseverance; 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 slaves who remained in captivity and oppression by slave owners; and

WHEREAS, On June 19, 1865, Union General Gordon Grangers and 2,000 federal troops arrived in Confederate-controlled Texas to take possession of the state and to enforce the emancipation of slaves 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 which resulted in an eruption of celebration and festivity; and

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

WHEREAS, Throughout the City of Philadelphia, community organizations and institutions and individuals will host a variety of events commemorating the 150th Anniversary of Juneteenth on Friday, June 19, 2015 which is recognized across the United States of America as National Juneteenth Day and most appropriately as Freedom Day; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby recognizes, honors, and commemorates Juneteenth Independence Day as the day of freedom from slavery in the Unites States of America more than 150 years ago.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Philadelphia Juneteenth Coalition as a symbol of this legislative body’s sincere respect for the precepts that are embodied in this observance.