



City of Philadelphia

City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
402 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Legislation Text

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Urging the U.S. Congress to pass Senate Bill 475 and House Resolution 1320, which designate Juneteenth as a national holiday.

WHEREAS, Juneteenth is the oldest recognized celebration of African Americans' liberation from institutional slavery in the United States. The celebration honors our ancestors who were subjected to the atrocity of slavery and celebrates the triumph of their liberation; and

WHEREAS, The Emancipation Proclamation was issued by President Abraham Lincoln on September 22, 1862, with an effective date of January 1, 1863. But it had minimal immediate effect because the Union had to enforce the order militarily, both during and after the Civil War; and

WHEREAS, On June 19, 1865, Union General Gordon Grangers and 2,000 federal troops arrived in Texas, the westernmost Confederate state, to take possession of the state and finally enforce the emancipation of its slaves. 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 finally free; and

WHEREAS, The joyous celebration of that day, known as Juneteenth, has been repeated through the years every June 19th. Philadelphians have long celebrated Juneteenth as an informal holiday, but they celebrated it as an official City holiday for the first time in 2020, by order of Mayor Jim Kenney; and

WHEREAS, On February 25, 2021, U.S. Senators Edward J. Markey, Tina Smith, and Cory Booker, along with U.S. Representative Sheila Jackson Lee (TX-18) re-introduced the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act, which makes Juneteenth a federal holiday; and

WHEREAS, This legislation has the support of hundreds of members of Congress and numerous organizations including National Juneteenth Observance Foundation, the Leadership Conference on Civil Human Rights, and the NAACP; and

WHEREAS, Federal recognition of the holiday would finally give recognition to the evils of American slavery and the centuries-long fight to redeem the American creed of equality for all; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby urges the U.S. Congress to pass Senate Bill 475 and House Resolution 1320, which designate Juneteenth as a national holiday.