

**SUBSTITUTE RESOLUTION OF THE MEMPHIS CITY COUNCIL REQUESTING
MAYOR STRICKLAND TO ESTABLISH JUNE 19TH AS JUNETEENTH WITHIN THE
CITY OF MEMPHIS THEREBY RECOGNIZING THE LIBERATION AND
EMANCIPATION OF ENSLAVED AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA**

WHEREAS, news of the end of slavery did not reach the frontier areas of the United States, in particular the State of Texas and the other Southwestern States, until months after the conclusion of the Civil War on April 9, 1865, more than 2½ years after President Abraham Lincoln formally issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863; and

WHEREAS, on June 19, 1865, Union soldiers, led by Major General Gordon Granger, arrived in Galveston, Texas, with welcomed news that the Civil War had ended and that the enslaved were free; and

WHEREAS, African-Americans who had been enslaved in the Southwest began celebrating June 19, commonly known as “Juneteenth Independence Day,” to inspire and encourage future generations; and

WHEREAS, African-Americans from across the Nation have continued the tradition of observing Juneteenth Independence Day for over 150 years; and

WHEREAS, 47 States and the District of Columbia have designated Juneteenth Independence Day as a special day of observance in recognition of the emancipation of all enslaved African-Americans in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth Independence Day celebrations have been held to honor African-American freedom while encouraging self-development and respect for all cultures; and

WHEREAS, the faith and strength of character demonstrated by formerly enslaved African-Americans and the descendants of formerly enslaved African-Americans remain an example for all people of the United States, regardless of background, religion, or race; and

WHEREAS, despite the formal issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, slavery was not officially abolished throughout the entire Nation until the ratification of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States in December 1865; and

WHEREAS, over the course of its history, the City of Memphis has seen the damaging effects of slavery, the fight for freedom by way of the civil rights movement, and present-day efforts to achieve equity for all:

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Memphis City Council hereby requests Mayor Strickland to establish June 19th as Juneteenth within the City of Memphis recognizing the liberation and emancipation of enslaved African-Americans in the United States of America.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Memphis City Council *specifically* requests Mayor Strickland to proclaim June 19th, or Juneteenth, as “***Juneteenth Independence Day***”; supporting the significance of the historical day to Memphis; recognizing the significance of the day as a renewed opportunity to learn more about the past and to better understand the need for an improved future; and securing the observance of the end of slavery as a part of the history and heritage of our Nation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Memphis City Council also requests Mayor Strickland to proclaim “Juneteenth Independence Day” as a paid holiday within the City of Memphis, to begin with June 19, 2021, i.e., during Fiscal Year 2021, observed on the Friday before, if June 19 falls on a non-business day.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution shall be substituted for and shall supersede and replace the Resolution on the same subject adopted by the Council on June 16, 2020.

Sponsor:
Councilwoman Michalyn Easter-Thomas