

House Bill 1235

By: Representatives Shannon of the 84<sup>th</sup>, Thomas of the 39<sup>th</sup>, Nguyen of the 89<sup>th</sup>, Scott of the 76<sup>th</sup>, Davis of the 87<sup>th</sup>, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 4 of Title 1 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to  
2 holidays and observances, so as to revise the number of holidays that are observed in  
3 Georgia; to designate June 19 of each year as "Juneteenth Independence Day" in Georgia and  
4 recognize such date as a state holiday; to provide for legislative findings; to provide for  
5 related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

7 **SECTION 1.**

8 The General Assembly finds that:

- 9 (1) News of the end of slavery did not reach the frontier areas of the United States, and  
10 in particular the southwestern states, for more than 2 1/2 years after President Abraham  
11 Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, which was issued on January 1, 1863, months after  
12 the conclusion of the Civil War;
- 13 (2) On June 19, 1865, Union soldiers, led by Major General Gordon Granger, arrived in  
14 Galveston, Texas, with news that the Civil War had ended and that the enslaved were  
15 free;
- 16 (3) Since that time, African Americans who had been slaves in the Southwest and their  
17 descendants have celebrated June 19, commonly known as "Juneteenth Independence  
18 Day," as inspiration and encouragement for future generations;
- 19 (4) Today, virtually every state and the District of Columbia have recognized June 19 as  
20 either a state holiday, a ceremonial holiday, or a day of observance in recognition of the  
21 emancipation of all slaves in the United States and to honor African-American freedom,  
22 while encouraging self-development and respect for all cultures; and
- 23 (5) It is fitting and proper that the State of Georgia should formally recognize such date.

24 **SECTION 2.**

25 Chapter 4 of Title 1 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to holidays and  
 26 observances, is amended by revising subsections (a) and (b) of Code Section 1-4-1, relating  
 27 to public and legal holidays and leave for observance of religious holidays not specifically  
 28 provided for as follows:

29 "(a) The State of Georgia shall recognize and observe as public and legal holidays:

30 (1) All days which have been designated as of January 1, 1984, as public and legal  
 31 holidays by the federal government; ~~and~~

32 (2) June 19 of each year, which shall be designated as "Juneteenth Independence Day";  
 33 and

34 ~~(2)(3)~~ All other days designated and proclaimed by the Governor as public and legal  
 35 holidays or as days of fasting and prayer or other religious observance. In such  
 36 designation, the Governor shall include at least one of the following dates: January 19,  
 37 April 26, or June 3, or a suitable date in lieu thereof to commemorate the event or events  
 38 now observed by such dates.

39 (b) The Governor shall close all state offices and facilities a minimum of ~~12~~ 13 days  
 40 throughout the year and not more than ~~12~~ 13 days in observance of the public and legal  
 41 holidays and other days set forth in subsection (a) of this Code section and shall specify the  
 42 days state offices and facilities shall be closed for such observances."

43 **SECTION 3.**

44 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.