

The House Committee on Governmental Affairs offers the following substitute to HB 973:

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 designate June 19 of each year as "Juneteenth"; to provide
3 legislative findings; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other
4 purposes.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

6 **SECTION 1.**

7 The General Assembly finds that:

- 8 (1) The Emancipation Proclamation was issued by President Abraham Lincoln on
9 January 1, 1863, and General Lee surrendered in April 1865, officially ending the United
10 States Civil War;
- 11 (2) News of the Emancipation Proclamation and the end of slavery did not reach Texas,
12 Oklahoma, Louisiana, Arkansas, and California until June 19, 1865;
- 13 (3) On that evening, thousands of former slaves flooded the streets in spontaneous
14 celebration, rejoicing in the news of their long-awaited freedom;
- 15 (4) To commemorate the joyous events of June 19, 1865, June 19 has been observed as
16 "Juneteenth";
- 17 (5) "Juneteenth" and similar Emancipation Day celebrations recognizing the abolition
18 of slavery are officially observed in numerous states and Washington, D.C.;
- 19 (6) Americans of all colors, creeds, cultures, religions, and countries of origin share in
20 a common love of and respect for freedom, as well as the determination to protect their
21 right to freedom through the democratic institutions by which the tenets of freedom are
22 guaranteed and protected; and
- 23 (7) It is only fitting and proper that the State of Georgia appropriately recognize this
24 glorious event marking the end of slavery and the beginning of freedom for so many who
25 had wrongfully suffered in this state and nation.

26

SECTION 2.

27 Chapter 4 of Title 1 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to holidays and
28 observances, is amended by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

29 "1-4-23.

30 The day of June 19 of each year is designated as 'Juneteenth' in Georgia in recognition of
31 the events that occurred on June 19, 1865, celebrating the Emancipation Proclamation and
32 the end of slavery."

33

SECTION 3.

34 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.