
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 871 Session of
2018

INTRODUCED BY KINSEY, V. BROWN, MILLARD, SIMS, HENNESSEY,
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NEILSON, RABB, WARD, CALTAGIRONE, SOLOMON, DRISCOLL,
SCHWEYER, O'NEILL, M. QUINN AND DALEY, APRIL 26, 2018

INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,
APRIL 26, 2018

A RESOLUTION

1 Observing June 19, 2018, as "Juneteenth Independence Day" in
2 Pennsylvania in recognition of June 19, 1865, the date on
3 which slavery was abolished finally in all regions of the
4 United States.

5 WHEREAS, For 153 years, Americans of African descent have
6 celebrated June 19 as "Juneteenth Independence Day" or
7 "Juneteenth National Freedom Day" in recognition of the human
8 struggles of their enslaved descendants; and

9 WHEREAS, According to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade
10 Database, between 1525 and 1866, the duration of the
11 transatlantic slave trade to the Americas, an estimated 12.5
12 million men, women and children were captured and forcibly
13 transported in bondage from their African homelands to the
14 Americas; and

15 WHEREAS, An estimated 10.7 million Africans, mostly from the
16 Congo, Nigeria, Angola and Senegambia, survived the hazardous
17 Middle Passage and disembarked in North America, the Caribbean

1 and South America; and

2 WHEREAS, History characterizes the transatlantic slave trade
3 as a brutal and horrific commercial and economic enterprise and
4 the enslavement of Africans as cruel, exploitative and
5 dehumanizing; and

6 WHEREAS, Lasting for nearly four centuries, the transatlantic
7 slave trade represents one of the longest and most sustained
8 assaults on the life, integrity and dignity of human beings in
9 history and one of the greatest tragedies in the history of
10 humanity; and

11 WHEREAS, With the enactment of The Act to Prohibit the
12 Importation of Slaves of 1807, the United States outlawed the
13 transatlantic slave trade in 1808; and

14 WHEREAS, Although the 1807 Federal legislation ended the
15 legality of the transatlantic slave trade in the United States,
16 the law was not universally enforced; and

17 WHEREAS, Enslaved Africans continued to be smuggled into the
18 United States and the domestic slave trade was not affected; and

19 WHEREAS, On January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued
20 the Emancipation Proclamation, which proclaimed all enslaved
21 Africans to be free; and

22 WHEREAS, News of the Emancipation Proclamation did not reach
23 the frontier, in particular the State of Texas and the other
24 southwestern states, until Union troops, commanded by Major
25 General Gordon Granger, arrived in Galveston, Texas, on June 19,
26 1865; and

27 WHEREAS, On that day in Galveston, more than two years after
28 President Lincoln issued his Emancipation Proclamation, Major
29 General Granger announced the end of the Civil War and issued
30 General Order No. 3, which proclaimed all slaves to be free,

1 including absolute equality in personal rights; and

2 WHEREAS, Slavery, as an institution, was not officially
3 abolished until the ratification of the 13th Amendment to the
4 Constitution of the United States on December 6, 1865; and

5 WHEREAS, In 1997, the 105th Congress of the United States
6 passed House Joint Resolution 56 and Senate Joint Resolution 11
7 to officially recognize Juneteenth as Independence Day for
8 Americans of African descent; and

9 WHEREAS, People nationwide join together to celebrate June 19
10 as "Juneteenth Independence Day" in recognition of the end of
11 slavery in all regions of the United States and to commemorate
12 the survival and determination of African men, women and
13 children who survived the monthlong journeys across the Atlantic
14 Ocean (the Middle Passage) and debarked to a life as slaves; and

15 WHEREAS, The faith, courage and strength of character
16 demonstrated by former slaves and the descendants of former
17 slaves remain an example for all people of the United States;
18 and

19 WHEREAS, The United States is the worldwide symbol of
20 democracy and freedom; therefore be it

21 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives:

22 (1) observe June 19, 2018, as "Juneteenth Independence
23 Day" in Pennsylvania in honor of the memory, resilience,
24 courage and determination of enslaved persons and of all
25 Americans, living and dead, who embody Dr. King's quote:
26 "None are free until all are free";

27 (2) recognize that the abolition of slavery is part of
28 the history and heritage of this Commonwealth; and

29 (3) encourage and support the continued celebration and
30 observance of "Juneteenth Independence Day" with appropriate

1 ceremonies, activities and programs to provide an opportunity
2 for the people of this Commonwealth to learn about the past
3 and better understand the institutions and experiences that
4 shaped our nation.