

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 569

Recognizing former Texas State Representative Al Edwards as the father of Juneteenth and showing appreciation for successfully passing Texas House Bill 1016, making Texas the first State to recognize Juneteenth (June 19) as an official State holiday.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 30, 2023

Mr. GREEN of Texas (for himself, Ms. WATERS, and Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability

RESOLUTION

Recognizing former Texas State Representative Al Edwards as the father of Juneteenth and showing appreciation for successfully passing Texas House Bill 1016, making Texas the first State to recognize Juneteenth (June 19) as an official State holiday.

Whereas Al Edwards was the first legislator to pass legislation making Juneteenth (June 19) a State holiday;

Whereas Albert Ely “Al” Edwards was a civil rights activist and former Texas house member of the Texas Legislature, serving in the legislature from 1978 to 2007 and then from 2009 to 2011;

Whereas Al Edwards was born on March 19, 1937, as the sixth child of Rev. E.L. Edwards, Sr., and Josephine Radford Edwards;

Whereas Al Edwards dedicated his career to championing human rights causes, such as making Americans aware of the significance of June 19, 1865, later known as Juneteenth;

Whereas, while serving in the Texas Legislature, Al Edwards served as the Texas State Director for Reverend Jesse Jackson's Presidential campaigns in 1984 and 1988;

Whereas Al Edwards also founded "Operation Justus", a community-based organization that served as a referral service for persons with social problems and concerns;

Whereas, in 1987, he was arrested and went to jail for peacefully protesting the apartheid regime in South Africa;

Whereas, throughout his tenure in the State legislature, Al Edwards served as the Chairman of the Rules and Resolutions Committee, Chairman of Budget and Oversight of the Ways and Means Committee, and a member of the Appropriations Committee;

Whereas he was elected the Chairman of the Democratic National Committee's Black Caucus and held that position for 6 years;

Whereas, in 1999, the Honorable Al Edwards was appointed Chairman of the Texas Emancipation Juneteenth Cultural and Historical Commission by then-Governor George W. Bush;

Whereas Al Edwards is also referred to as "Mr. Juneteenth" because of his tireless commitment to the establishment of Juneteenth as a State holiday in Texas through Texas House Bill 1016;

Whereas Al Edwards advocated for Juneteenth’s recognition nationwide through work with State legislatures over his decades-long career;

Whereas ultimately Al Edwards was successful in creating a holiday which recognizes the day enslaved individuals in Texas were notified of their newfound freedom;

Whereas today Juneteenth is recognized as a Federal holiday and is celebrated by millions nationwide; and

Whereas, because Al Edwards laid the foundation for Juneteenth becoming a Federal holiday, we resolve to recognize him as the father of Juneteenth: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved,*

2 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

3 This resolution may be cited as “The Original Reso-
4 lution Recognizing Al Edwards as the Father of
5 Juneteenth”.

6 **SEC. 2. RECOGNITION AND APPRECIATION.**

7 The House of Representatives recognizes former
8 Texas State Representative Al Edwards as the father of
9 Juneteenth and shows appreciation for his extraordinary
10 work to garner recognition for the day.

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