

SENATE RESOLUTION No. 1860

A RESOLUTION in support and observance of the annual Juneteenth National Freedom Day.

WHEREAS, For more than 137 years, Juneteenth National Freedom Day continues to be the most recognized African-American holiday observance in the United States. Also known as “Emancipation Day,” “Emancipation Celebration,” “Freedom Day,” “Jun-Jun,” “Juneteenth Independence Day” and “June-teenth.” Juneteenth National Freedom Day commemorates the survival, due to God-given strength and determination, of African Americans who were first brought to this country stacked in the bottom of slave ships in a month long journey across the Atlantic Ocean’s “Middle Passage”; and

WHEREAS, Approximately eleven and one-half million African Americans survived the voyage to the New World—the number that died is likely greater—only to be subjected to whipping, castration, branding and rape, and to have their families torn apart and forced into slavery for more than 200 years after arrival in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth commemorates the day freedom was proclaimed to all slaves in the South by Union General Gordon Granger, in Galveston, Texas, on June 19, 1865, which was more than two and a half years after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation by President Abraham Lincoln; and

WHEREAS, For the first time, in over 130 years of the annual celebration, Juneteenth has finally been officially recognized as Juneteenth Independence Day in America by the President and Congress of the United States. This reality is particularly underscored by the fact that it was in the 1st session of the 105th Congress in 1997, via the bipartisan cooperation of the former Congresswoman Barbara Rose-Collins (D-Michigan), former Senator Carol Mosely-Braun (D-Illinois), Congressman J.C. Watts (R-Oklahoma), former House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Georgia), Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-Mississippi) and Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle (D-South Dakota), that Senate Joint Resolution 11 and House Joint Resolution 56 were successfully shepherded through both houses of Congress in a successful effort to officially recognize Juneteenth as the Independence Day Observance of Americans of African descent; and

WHEREAS, Americans of all colors, creeds, cultures, religions and countries-of-origin, share in a common love of and respect for freedom, as well as a determination to protect their right to freedom through democratic institutions, by which the tenets of freedom are guaranteed and protected. The 19th of June or Juneteenth Independence Day, along with the 4th of July, completes the “cycle of freedom” for America’s Independence Day observances. “Until All are Free, None are Free” is an oft repeated maxim that can be used to highlight the significance of the end of the era of slavery in the United States; and

WHEREAS, The National Juneteenth Observance Foundation is sponsoring the premier celebration, concert, worship services and campaign to commemorate “America’s 2nd Independence Day Observance,” the 19th of June, as one which completes the cycle of America’s 18th century Independence Movement, which was initiated by the July 4, 1776 Declaration of Independence, and to recognize this country’s movement towards “One America,” advanced by a sincere dialogue, realization of what Juneteenth historically means to all Americans, and the promotion of racial healing, restoration and justice; and

WHEREAS, Kansas, ever since its acceptance into the Union as a free state, has played a significant role in African-American history. John Brown, perhaps the most notorious abolitionist in history, moved to Kansas in 1855 to retaliate against proslavery actions in Lawrence and aided in securing Kansas for Free-Soil settlers. The township of Nicodemus, founded in 1877 during the Reconstruction Period, is the only remaining western town established by African Americans. Langston Hughes, poet and writer, grew up in Lawrence. Gordon Parks, the renowned African-American photographer, writer, director and actor, was born and raised in Fort Scott. Hattie McDaniel, the Academy Award-winning actress who played the role of Mammy in *Gone With the Wind*, was born in Wichita. The landmark Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, which declared that separate educational facilities are inherently unequal, arose from opposition to the segregated school system in Topeka. The first lunch counter sit-in took place in 1958 at the Dockum Building in Wichita. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate of the State of Kansas: That we support the National Juneteenth Holiday Campaign and encourage participation by all citizens in observance of Juneteenth National Freedom Day; and

Be it further resolved: That the Secretary of the Senate provide three enrolled copies of this resolution to Senator Donald Betts.

Senate Resolution No. 1860 was sponsored by Senator Donald Betts.

I hereby certify that the above RESOLUTION originated in the SENATE, and was adopted by that body

President of the Senate.

Secretary of the Senate.