

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 198

Observing the historical significance of Juneteenth Independence Day.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 19, 2009

Mr. BURRIS (for himself, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mr. LEVIN, Mrs. HUTCHISON, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Observing the historical significance of Juneteenth
Independence Day.

Whereas news of the end of slavery did not reach frontier areas of the United States, and in particular the southwestern States, for more than 2½ years after President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, which was issued on January 1, 1863, and months after the conclusion of the Civil War;

Whereas, on June 19, 1865, Union soldiers led by Major General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas with news that the Civil War had ended and that the enslaved were free;

Whereas African-Americans who had been slaves in the Southwest celebrated June 19, commonly known as

“Juneteenth Independence Day”, as the anniversary of their emancipation;

Whereas African-Americans from the Southwest continue the tradition of celebrating Juneteenth Independence Day as inspiration and encouragement for future generations;

Whereas for more than 140 years, Juneteenth Independence Day celebrations have been held to honor African-American freedom while encouraging self-development and respect for all cultures;

Whereas although Juneteenth Independence Day is beginning to be recognized as a national, and even global, event, the history behind the celebration should not be forgotten; and

Whereas the faith and strength of character demonstrated by former slaves remains an example for all people of the United States, regardless of background, religion, or race: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That—

2 (1) the Senate—

3 (A) recognizes the historical significance of
4 Juneteenth Independence Day to the Nation;

5 (B) supports the continued celebration of
6 Juneteenth Independence Day to provide an op-
7 portunity for the people of the United States to
8 learn more about the past and to understand
9 better the experiences that have shaped the Na-
10 tion; and

1 (C) encourages the people of the United
2 States to observe Juneteenth Independence Day
3 with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and pro-
4 grams; and

5 (2) it is the sense of the Senate that—

6 (A) the celebration of the end of slavery is
7 an important and enriching part of the history
8 and heritage of the United States; and

9 (B) history should be regarded as a means
10 for understanding the past and solving the chal-
11 lenges of the future.

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