

**SENATE CONCURRENT
RESOLUTION No. 119**

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JUNE 29, 2020

Sponsored by:
Senator JOSEPH P. CRYAN
District 20 (Union)

SYNOPSIS

Respectfully urges federal government and State of New Jersey designate “Juneteenth” as federal and State holiday.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



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1 **A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION** respectfully urging the federal
2 government and State of New Jersey to designate “Juneteenth” as
3 a federal and State holiday.

4
5 **WHEREAS**, Juneteenth was first observed over 150 years ago and is the
6 oldest known celebration of the abolition of slavery in the United
7 States; and

8 **WHEREAS**, Juneteenth commemorates June 19, 1865, the day General
9 Gordon Granger rode into Galveston, Texas, with news that the Civil
10 War had ended and the enslaved were free; and

11 **WHEREAS**, Word of freedom finally reached the slaves in Texas, two
12 and a half years after the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation, and
13 enslaved people in the South were made aware of their freedom and
14 jubilant celebrations evolved into a general celebration of freedom;
15 and

16 **WHEREAS**, The celebration of Juneteenth symbolizes freedom,
17 celebrates the abolition of slavery, and reminds all Americans of the
18 significant contributions Black Americans have made to our society;
19 and

20 **WHEREAS**, Juneteenth serves as a reminder to all Americans of the
21 triumph of the human spirit over the cruelty of slavery, honors those
22 Black Americans who survived the inhumane institution of bondage,
23 and demonstrates pride in their legacy of resistance and
24 perseverance; and

25 **WHEREAS**, Juneteenth was first given official State recognition when,
26 in 1980, Texas made it an official state holiday, and a campaign
27 exists to establish Juneteenth as a national holiday; and

28 **WHEREAS**, Juneteenth continues to enjoy growing interest, recognition,
29 and celebration among organizations and communities throughout
30 the country, with Juneteenth-centered activities having been
31 sponsored by such institutions as the Smithsonian Museum and the
32 Henry Ford Museum; and

33 **WHEREAS**, In New Jersey, Juneteenth has been recognized since the
34 enactment of P.L.2004, c.3 (C.36:2-80), and is celebrated in
35 communities such as East Orange, Elizabeth, Camden, Jersey City,
36 Paterson, Pennington, Trenton, and Willingboro; and

37 **WHEREAS**, It is proper and fitting for the United States and the State of
38 New Jersey to designate “Juneteenth” as a federal and State holiday
39 each year to celebrate the emancipation of Black Americans; now,
40 therefore,

41
42 **BE IT RESOLVED** by the Senate of the State of New Jersey (the
43 General Assembly concurring):

44
45 1. The Legislature respectfully urges the United States and the
46 State of New Jersey to designate “Juneteenth” as a federal and State
47 holiday each year to celebrate the emancipation of Black Americans.

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1 2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State,
2 shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly or the
3 Secretary of the Senate to the President of the United States, Vice
4 President of the United States, Speaker of the United States House of
5 Representatives, Majority Leader of the United States Senate,
6 Governor of New Jersey, and each member of Congress elected from
7 this State.

STATEMENT

12 This resolution respectfully urges the United States and the State
13 of New Jersey to designate “Juneteenth” as a federal and State
14 holiday each year to honor and celebrate the emancipation of Black
15 Americans.

16 Juneteenth was first observed over 150 years ago and is the oldest
17 known celebration of the abolition of slavery in the United States.
18 Juneteenth commemorates June 19, 1865, the day General Gordon
19 Granger rode into Galveston, Texas, with news that the Civil War
20 had ended and the enslaved were free. Word of freedom finally
21 reached the slaves in Texas, two and a half years after the 1863
22 Emancipation Proclamation, and so enslaved people in the South
23 were made aware of their freedom and jubilant celebrations evolved
24 into a general celebration of freedom

25 The celebration of Juneteenth symbolizes freedom, celebrates the
26 abolition of slavery, and reminds all Americans of the significant
27 contributions Black Americans have made to our society. Juneteenth
28 serves as a reminder to all Americans of the triumph of the human
29 spirit over the cruelty of slavery, honors those Black Americans who
30 survived the inhumane institution of bondage, and demonstrates
31 pride in their legacy of resistance and perseverance.

32 Juneteenth was first given official State recognition when, in
33 1980, Texas made it an official state holiday, and a campaign exists
34 to establish Juneteenth as a national holiday. Juneteenth continues to
35 enjoy growing interest, recognition, and celebration among
36 organizations and communities throughout the country. With the
37 ongoing protests concerning the “Black Lives Matter” movement,
38 Juneteenth has experienced an even greater revival of attention both
39 nationally and within the State. In New Jersey, Juneteenth is
40 celebrated in communities such as East Orange, Elizabeth, Camden,
41 Jersey City, Paterson, Pennington, Trenton, and Willingboro.