

1 [Urging to Declare June 19th be Observed as Juneteenth]

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3 **Resolution urging the City and County of San Francisco to declare that June 19th shall**  
4 **annually be observed as Juneteenth, urging the President of the United States and the**  
5 **United States Congress to officially designate June 19th annually as a federal holiday**  
6 **to honor the Black community, and encouraging all businesses in the City, both public**  
7 **and private, to either close on June 19th, pay workers overtime pay that they would**  
8 **typically get on a paid holiday, and/or allow the many workers and students in the City**  
9 **who want to attend Juneteenth events to honor and celebrate Juneteenth celebrations**  
10 **and commemorations that take place to take the day off or leave work and school early**  
11 **with no adverse academic or employment consequence.**

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13 WHEREAS, Juneteenth, also known as “Juneteenth Independence Day,”  
14 “Emancipation Day,” “Emancipation Celebration,” and “Freedom Day,” is the oldest African  
15 American holiday observance in the United States; and

16 WHEREAS, Juneteenth commemorates the strong survival instinct of African  
17 Americans who were first brought to this country stacked in the bottom of slave ships in a  
18 month-long journey across the Atlantic Ocean known as the “Middle Passage;” and

19 WHEREAS, Events in the history of the United States that led to the start of the Civil  
20 War in 1861 centered on sectional differences between the North and the South that were  
21 based on the economic and social divergence caused by the existence of slavery; and

22 WHEREAS, In 1862, the first clear signs that the end of slavery was imminent  
23 appeared when laws abolishing slavery were adopted in the territories of Oklahoma,  
24 Nebraska, Colorado, and New Mexico; and

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1           WHEREAS, In September 1862, President Lincoln issued the celebrated Emancipation  
2 Proclamation, warning the rebellious Confederate states that he would declare their slaves  
3 “forever free” if those states did not return to the Union by January 1, 1863; and

4           WHEREAS, Enforcement of the Emancipation Proclamation occurred only in  
5 Confederate states that were under Union Army control; and

6           WHEREAS, On January 31, 1865, Congress passed the Thirteenth Amendment to the  
7 United States Constitution, abolishing slavery throughout the United States and its territories;  
8 and

9           WHEREAS, Spontaneous celebration erupted throughout the country when African  
10 Americans learned of their freedom; and

11           WHEREAS, Juneteenth, or June 19, 1865, is considered the date when the last slaves  
12 in America were freed when General Gordon Granger rode into Galveston, Texas, and issued  
13 General Order No. 3, almost two and one-half years after President Lincoln issued the  
14 Emancipation Proclamation; and

15           WHEREAS, For former slaves, the Juneteenth celebration was a time for reassuring  
16 each other, praying, and gathering remaining family members together. Juneteenth continued  
17 to be highly revered in Texas decades later, with many former slaves and descendants  
18 making an annual pilgrimage back to Galveston on this date; and

19           WHEREAS, Juneteenth education and celebrations declined in America in the early  
20 part of the 20th century; but the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s saw a  
21 resurgence of interest in Juneteenth, along with renewed community celebrations of the day;  
22 and

23           WHEREAS, Observance of Juneteenth, a reminder of emancipation, spread from  
24 Texas to the neighboring states of Louisiana, Arkansas, and Oklahoma, as well as Alabama,  
25 Florida, and California, where many African American Texans migrated; and

1           WHEREAS, The state of Texas is widely considered the first state to begin Juneteenth  
2 celebrations; informal observances have taken place there for over a century and it has been  
3 an official state holiday in Texas since 1980; thirty-nine states, including California since 2003,  
4 and the District of Columbia have recognized Juneteenth as either a state holiday or a state  
5 holiday observance; and

6           WHEREAS, In 1994, the era of the “Modern Juneteenth Movement” began when a  
7 group of Juneteenth leaders from across the country gathered in New Orleans, Louisiana, to  
8 work for greater national recognition of Juneteenth; and

9           WHEREAS, Today, Juneteenth commemorates African American freedom and  
10 emphasizes education and achievement; it is a day, a week, and in some areas, a month  
11 marked with celebrations, guest speakers, picnics, and family gatherings; it is a time for  
12 reflection and rejoicing; it is a time for assessment, self-improvement, and planning for the  
13 future; and

14           WHEREAS, Juneteenth symbolizes freedom, celebrates the abolishment of slavery,  
15 and reminds all Americans of the significant contributions of African Americans to our society;  
16 and

17           WHEREAS, A growing number of American and African American cultural institutions  
18 have sponsored Juneteenth cultural events designed to make all Americans aware of this  
19 celebration; and

20           WHEREAS, Juneteenth celebrations are a tribute to those African Americans who  
21 fought so long and worked so hard to make the dream of equality a reality; and

22           WHEREAS, Juneteenth is an important day in American history, one that remains  
23 meaningful to millions of African Americans and is why lawmakers are now pushing for  
24 Juneteenth to become a national holiday; and

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1           WHEREAS, On June 19, 2020, Democratic Representative Sheila Jackson Lee,  
2           Democratic Senator Kamala Harris, and Republican Senator John Coryn announced their  
3           intentions to introduce bills in Congress to officially recognize the day as a national holiday;  
4           and

5           WHEREAS, Juneteenth is currently observed in some form in 47 states and the District  
6           of Columbia. Hawaii, North Dakota and South Dakota are the only states that currently do not  
7           recognize the holiday, while New York, Virginia, Oregon and Philadelphia announced the  
8           week of June 15, 2020, that they will also recognize the day as an official holiday; and

9           WHEREAS, For years, Congressional leaders in both the House and Senate have  
10          passed resolutions to recognize Juneteenth as Independence Day, but legislation to declare it  
11          a national holiday has stalled; now, therefore, be it

12          RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors declares that June 19th shall annually be  
13          observed as Juneteenth in the City and County of San Francisco; and, be it

14          FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges the President of the  
15          United States and the United States Congress to officially designate June 19th as a federal  
16          holiday to honor the African American community and the relentless systems of racism and  
17          oppression that impact every aspect of African Americans' lives; and, be it

18          FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors encourages all entities and  
19          businesses in the City, both public and private, to either close on June 19th, pay workers  
20          overtime pay that they would typically get on a paid holiday, and/or allow the many workers  
21          and students in the City who want to attend Juneteenth events to honor and celebrate  
22          Juneteenth celebrations and commemorations that take place to take the day off or leave  
23          work and school early with no adverse academic or employment consequence; and, be it

24          FURTHER RESOLVED, That this Board of Supervisors urges the people of San  
25          Francisco to join in celebrating Juneteenth as a day to honor and reflect on the significant role

1 that African Americans have played in the history of the United States and how for the  
2 majority of our history were recognized only as property and not as human beings and due to  
3 this still experience the ramifications of their legal disenfranchisement to this day.

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