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THIRD READING

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Bill No: SCR 41  
Author: Bradford (D), et al.  
Introduced: 5/4/21  
Vote: 21

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**SUBJECT:** Juneteenth

**SOURCE:** Author

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**DIGEST:** This resolution recognizes June 19, 2021, as Juneteenth and urges the people of California to join in celebrating Juneteenth as a day to honor and reflect on the significant role that African Americans have played in the history of the United States and how they have enriched society through their steadfast commitment to promoting unity and equality.

**ANALYSIS:** This resolution makes the following legislative findings:

- 1) Juneteenth, also known as “Juneteenth Independence Day,” “Emancipation Day,” “Emancipation Celebration,” and “Freedom Day,” is the oldest African American holiday observance in the United States.
- 2) Juneteenth, or June 19, 1865, is considered the date when the last slaves in America were freed when General Gordon Granger rode into Galveston, Texas, and issued General Order No. 3, almost two and one-half years after President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation.
- 3) Juneteenth commemorates the strong survival instinct of African Americans who were first brought to this country stacked and shackled in the bottom of slave ships in a monthlong journey across the Atlantic Ocean known as the “Middle Passage”.
- 4) August 2019 will mark 400 years since the first arrival of Africans to colonial America, and the United States Congress has established the 400 Years of African-American History Commission to commemorate the historic heritage and contributions that Americans of African descent have made to help shape the cultural, academic, social, economic, and moral attributes of this nation.

- 5) In August 1619, the first documented Africans arrived in the English colony of Virginia. The group, recorded upon arrival as “20 and odd Negros,” was part of a larger group of West Africans enslaved by Portuguese slave traders. They were on their way to Veracruz, Mexico, aboard a Spanish ship when they were captured off the coast of Mexico by an English privateer ship and transported to Virginia, where they were put ashore at what is now Hampton, Virginia, and sold as involuntary laborers or indentured servants.
- 6) On September 22, 1862, President Lincoln issued the celebrated Emancipation Proclamation, warning the rebellious Confederate States that he would declare their slaves “forever free” if those states did not return to the Union by January 1, 1863. Enforcement of the Emancipation Proclamation occurred only in Confederate States that were under Union Army control.
- 7) Texas, as a part of the Confederacy, was resistant to the Emancipation Proclamation. But on June 18, 1865, Union troops arrived in Galveston, Texas, to take possession of the state and enforce the emancipation of its slaves. Former slaves in Galveston rejoiced in the streets with jubilant celebrations. The following day, June 19th, became known as “Juneteenth,” a name derived from a portmanteau of the words “June” and “nineteenth.” Juneteenth celebrations began in Texas the following year.
- 8) California law requires the Governor to proclaim the third Saturday in June of each year to be known as “Juneteenth National Freedom Day: A day of observance,” to urge all Californians in celebrating this day to honor and reflect on the significant roles that African-Americans have played in the history of the United States and how African-Americans have enriched society through their steadfast commitment to promoting freedom, brotherhood, and equality.

This resolution:

- 1) Recognizes June 19, 2021, as Juneteenth.
- 2) Urges the people of California to join in celebrating Juneteenth as a day to honor and reflect on the significant role that African Americans have played in the history of the United States and how they have enriched society through their steadfast commitment to promoting unity and equality.

### **Related/Prior Legislation**

SCR 91 (Bradford, 2020) would have recognized June 19, 2020), as Juneteenth. The resolution was never heard.

SCR 58 (Bradford, Resolution Chapter 111, Statutes of 2019) recognized June 19, 2019, as Juneteenth.

SCR 145 (Bradford, Resolution Chapter 112, Statutes of 2018) recognized June 19, 2018, as Juneteenth.

ACR 100 (Holden, Resolution Chapter 116, Statutes of 2017) recognized June 19, 2017, as Juneteenth.

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: No Local: No

**SUPPORT:** (Verified 5/10/21)

California Professional Firefighters

**OPPOSITION:** (Verified 5/10/21)

None received

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5/12/21 15:52:11

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