

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 2001-4665, by Representatives Veloria, Kagi, Linville, Sump and Woods

WHEREAS, The three most significant documents in United States history that exemplify America's passion for freedom are the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the Emancipation Proclamation; and

WHEREAS, Each has maintained its rightful place in the annals of American history, only the Constitution and the Bill of Rights have identifiable dates emphasizing their importance to the American People through celebration of the Fourth of July, Constitution Day, and Flag Day; and

WHEREAS, President Abraham Lincoln ended slavery in the United States with the Emancipation Proclamation, which became official January 1, 1863; and

WHEREAS, Slavery remained in the state of Texas for more than two years after the Emancipation Proclamation was signed by President Abraham Lincoln; and

WHEREAS, On June 19, 1865, Major General Gordon Granger of the Union Army led his troops into the city of Galveston, Texas and officially proclaimed freedom for slaves in that state; and

WHEREAS, General Granger's order reads in part: "The people of Texas are informed that in accordance with a Proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of rights and rights of property between masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and free laborer"; and

WHEREAS, The celebration of "Juneteenth" - June 19th - is the oldest known celebration of the ending of slavery because it marks the day that slaves in the state of Texas were informed of the Emancipation Proclamation; and

WHEREAS, As African-Americans from Texas and other parts of the South began to migrate to other parts of the United States, they took with them the tradition of Juneteenth, spreading the word that African-American Freedom has roots in the celebration of Juneteenth; and

WHEREAS, In 1979, African-American lawmaker Al Edwards of Texas revitalized Juneteenth by sponsoring and pushing through legislation to make Juneteenth an official holiday in Texas; and

WHEREAS, Al Edwards has worked hard to spread the observance of Juneteenth across America; and

WHEREAS, Today, Juneteenth commemorates African-American freedom emphasizing education and achievement, through reflection, rejoicing, and planning for the future;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize the efforts of Al Edwards and encourage the celebration of the end of slavery every June 19th; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be immediately transmitted by the Co-Chief Clerks of the House of Representatives to Al Edwards and all school districts in the state of Washington.

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