



SPONSOR: Sen. Brown & Sen. Lockman & Rep. Dorsey Walker

DELAWARE STATE SENATE
150th GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SENATE BILL NO. 257

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 1 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO MAKING JUNETEENTH NATIONAL FREEDOM DAY A LEGAL HOLIDAY.

1 WHEREAS, Juneteenth is the oldest recognized celebration commemorating the abolition of slavery in the United
2 States and the emancipation of African American slaves throughout the Confederate South; and

3 WHEREAS, the holiday commemorates June 19, 1865, the day Union soldiers landed in Galveston, Texas, with
4 news that the Civil War had ended and the enslaved were free, creating cause for jubilant celebrations that evolved into a
5 general celebration of freedom; and

6 WHEREAS, June 19 is the freedom forerunner to the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution,
7 which granted freedom to all slaves in the United States, and the date is pivotal in our nation's Independence Day
8 movement; and

9 WHEREAS, Juneteenth serves as an extremely significant day of remembrance and acknowledgment of the
10 history, freedom, culture, strength, perseverance, and achievement of the past, present, and future generations of the African
11 American community; and

12 WHEREAS, Juneteenth holds an important place not only in African American history, but in United States
13 history for all Americans to reflect on, learn about, and appreciate the struggles, triumphs, and continued growth of our
14 nation as a whole; and

15 WHEREAS, the faith and character demonstrated by former slaves and their descendants remain an example for
16 all people of the United States, regardless of background, religion, or race; and

17 WHEREAS, after the emancipation from 246 years of slavery, African American continue to experience the
18 vestiges of slavery from challenges to voting rights, inadequate public education systems, lack of access to capital lending
19 institutions, and other social and economic injustices.

20 NOW, THEREFORE:

21 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE:

22 Section 1. Amend § 501, Title 1 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by strike through and
23 insertions as shown by underline as follows:

24 § 501. Designation.

25 (a)(1) The following days ~~shall be~~ are legal holidays in this State:

26 a. ~~January 1, known as New Year's Day;~~ Day.

27 b. ~~the~~ The third Monday in January, known as Martin Luther King, Jr. ~~Day;~~ Day.

28 c. The third Friday of June, known as Juneteenth National Freedom Day.

29 d. ~~Good Friday;~~ Friday.

30 e. July 4, known as Independence ~~Day;~~ Day.

31 f. ~~the~~ The first Monday in September, known as Labor ~~Day;~~ Day.

32 g. November 11, known as Veterans' ~~Day;~~ Day.

33 h. ~~the~~ The fourth Thursday in November, known as Thanksgiving ~~Day;~~ Day.

34 i. ~~the~~ The Friday following Thanksgiving ~~Day;~~ Day.

35 j. December 25, known as ~~Christmas;~~ Christmas.

36 k. ~~Saturdays;~~ Saturdays.

37 l. ~~the~~ The day of the General Election as it biennially ~~occurs;~~ occurs.

38 m. ~~and in~~ In Sussex County, Return Day, the second day after the General Election, after 12:00 Noon.

39 (2) If any of the legal holidays fall on Sunday, the Monday following ~~shall be~~ is a legal holiday. If any of the
40 legal holidays other than Saturday fall on Saturday, the Friday preceding ~~shall be~~ is a legal holiday.

41 (b) The last Monday in May ~~shall be~~ is the legal holiday, known as Memorial Day, in the State.

42 (c) Veteran's Day ~~shall be~~ is a legal holiday for all public school students and the employees of public school
43 districts and charter schools. If Veteran's Day falls on a Sunday, the following Monday ~~shall be~~ is a legal holiday. If
44 Veteran's Day falls on a Saturday, the preceding Friday ~~shall be~~ is a legal holiday.

45 (d) The Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall promulgate policies and procedures to implement
46 2 floating holidays.

SYNOPSIS

Juneteenth National Freedom Day commemorates June 19, 1865, the date news finally reached African Americans in Galveston, Texas that Abraham Lincoln had issued the Emancipation Proclamation freeing slaves living in Confederate states.

In 2000, Chapter 269 of Volume 72 of the Laws of Delaware designated the third Saturday in June as Juneteenth National Freedom Day, a special day to be commemorated in this State by appropriate ceremonies.

This Act designates the third Friday in June, Juneteenth National Freedom Day, as a legal holiday.

This Act also makes technical corrections to conform existing law to the standards of the Delaware Legislative Drafting Manual.

Author: Senator Brown