

## RESOLUTION

Calling on the Kenney Administration to take all necessary steps to ensure that Juneteenth continues to be an official City holiday

**WHEREAS**, Juneteenth is the oldest recognized holiday observing the liberation of African-Americans from slavery in the United States. The celebration honors our ancestors who survived that wicked, inhumane bondage and demonstrates pride in their legacy of perseverance; and

**WHEREAS**, The Emancipation Proclamation was issued on September 22, 1862, with an effective date of January 1, 1863, but it had minimal immediate effect on the majority of slaves who remained in captivity and oppression by slave owners; and

**WHEREAS**, On June 19, 1865, Union General Gordon Granger and 2,000 federal troops arrived in Confederate-controlled Texas to take possession of the state and to enforce the emancipation of slaves throughout the state. Two years, five months, and eighteen days after President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, the last of those enslaved within the borders of the United States were freed, which resulted in an eruption of celebration and festivity; and

**WHEREAS**, Throughout the City of Philadelphia, community organizations and institutions and individuals commemorate the significance of this day on June 19<sup>th</sup>, which is recognized across the United States of America as Juneteenth, or Freedom Day; and

**WHEREAS**, On January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the City of Philadelphia announced that Juneteenth would not be designated as an official holiday for 2021. This comes after Mayor Kenney used a one-time executive action in 2020 to designate the June 19<sup>th</sup> celebration, commemorating the end of slavery in the United States, an official City holiday for the first time in Philadelphia; and

**WHEREAS**, On June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Mayor Kenney released the following statement highlighting the importance of Juneteenth:

The only way to dismantle the institutional racism and inequalities that continue to disenfranchise Black Philadelphians is to look critically at how we got here, and make much-needed changes to the governmental systems that allow inequality to persist. This designation of Juneteenth represents my administration's commitment to reckon with our own role in maintaining racial inequities and our understanding of the magnitude of work that lies ahead.

The continued truth of these words underscores the need for the continued designation of Juneteenth as an official holiday; and

**WHEREAS**, The holiday will continue to be celebrated by other agencies, including The School District of Philadelphia, as well as Pennsylvania government agencies under an order by Gov. Tom Wolf; and

**WHEREAS**, It is imperative that the Kenney Administration continue to designate Juneteenth an official City holiday, recognizing its importance to history as the day that finally all citizens of the United States became free; now, therefore be it

**RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA,** That it hereby calls on the Kenney Administration to take all necessary steps to ensure that Juneteenth continues to be an official City holiday.

Introduced by **Kenyatta Johnson**, 2<sup>nd</sup> District Councilmember  
Co-sponsored by **Curtis Jones Jr.** 4<sup>th</sup> District Councilmember  
January 28, 2020