

PROCLAMATION

A Proclamation recognizing Juneteenth

WHEREAS, it has been over four hundred years since the *arrival of the first kidnapped African slaves in Point Comfort (Hampton), Virginia, in 1619; and*

WHEREAS, Juneteenth recognizes and commemorates the day of June 19, 1865, when enslaved African-Americans in Texas were informed by Major General Gordon Granger that they were “free,” ending 246 years of chattel slavery; and

WHEREAS, slavery throughout the United States had been abolished some two and a half years earlier when President Abraham Lincoln enacted the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, but resistance to the Executive Order, as well as continued fighting in the state of Texas regarding the abolishment of slavery significantly delayed the freedom of those enslaved; and

WHEREAS, on June 19, 1866, one year after Major Granger’s announcement, the freed African American men and women in the state of Texas held the first “Juneteenth,” or African American Independence Day celebration, and Juneteenth celebrations would later spread to all corners of the country including here in Seattle; and

WHEREAS, cities, counties, states, and corporations across the nation have begun recognizing Juneteenth as a paid holiday; and Congress is also taking steps to recognize Juneteenth as a national holiday; and

WHEREAS, for Black people in this country, Juneteenth is the closest occasion of a “freedom day” to celebrate;

WHEREAS, the struggle for the total freedom of Black people has not been achieved, the gains toward that freedom deserved to be named; and

WHEREAS, the work of Black Liberation ranges across the country, across time, and across multiple layers of identity because the Black experience is not a monolith;

WHEREAS, Black leaders from Marsha P. Johnson at Stonewall, to A. Philip Randolph fighting for the dignity of Black workers have impacted our national construct of justice;

WHEREAS, the continued violence against the Black Trans Community **eclipses** national averages of assault, harassment, intimidation and murder;

WHEREAS, Black community leaders, organizations, and movements continue to fight for Black liberation today: Black Lives Matter, Black Lives Matter of Seattle/King County, Mothers for Police Accountability, Community Passageways, Creative Justice, Not this Time, The Urban League, AfricaTown, Tabor 100, the ACLU, NAACP, Choose 180, Equal Rights WA, Village of Hope, EPIC, No New Youth Jail, the countless families of those lost to police violence and murder;

WHEREAS, artists, educators, housing providers, journalists, faith leaders, and individuals have taken to the streets across the city, and the globe;

WHEREAS, in Seattle, Juneteenth will be observed in people's homes, neighborhoods, and hearts; and

WHEREAS, there are still many vestiges of slavery that persist and we as country have a long way to go until we reach full economic and social equity, and an to end anti-blackness;

NOW, THEREFORE, we, the Seattle City Council, proclaim and recognize June 19, 2020, as

JUNETEENTH

in Seattle, honoring its historic importance, acknowledging the work still to come, and encouraging all residents to join us in its celebration, because Freedom is worth celebrating.

We dedicate this proclamation to the Black Employees of the City of Seattle in honor of their many sacrifices and commitment to this community.



Council President M. Lorena González



Councilmember Lisa Herbold



Councilmember Debora Juarez



Councilmember Andrew J. Lewis



Councilmember Tammy J. Morales



Councilmember Teresa Mosqueda



Councilmember Alex Pedersen



Councilmember Kshama Sawant



Councilmember Dan Strauss