

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 16

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2001 Regular Session
11r2913

By: **Senators Conway, Blount, Currie, Exum, Forehand, Frosh, Hollinger,
Hughes, Kelley, Lawlah, McFadden, Mitchell, Sfikas, and Teitelbaum**

Introduced and read first time: February 21, 2001

Assigned to: Rules

Re-referred to: Economic and Environmental Affairs, February 23, 2001

Committee Report: Favorable

Senate action: Adopted

Read second time: March 20, 2001

RESOLUTION NO. _____

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A Senate Joint Resolution concerning

2 **Juneteenth National Freedom Day**

3 FOR the purpose of urging the Governor of Maryland to declare June 19, 2001,
4 Juneteenth National Freedom Day in the State.

5 WHEREAS, More than 130 years old, Juneteenth National Freedom Day is the
6 oldest and only African American holiday observance in the United States; and

7 WHEREAS, Also known as "Emancipation Day," "Emancipation Celebration,"
8 "Freedom Day," "Jun-Jun," and "Juneteenth," Juneteenth National Freedom Day
9 commemorates the strong survival instinct of African Americans who were first
10 brought to this country crowded into the bottom of slave ships in a month-long
11 journey across the Atlantic Ocean known as the "Middle Passage"; and

12 WHEREAS, Approximately eleven and one-half million African Americans
13 survived the voyage to the New World - and the number who died during passage is
14 likely greater - only to be subjected to whipping, castration, branding, and rape and
15 forced to submit to slavery for more than 200 years after their arrival in the United
16 States; and

17 WHEREAS, Events in the history of the United States which led to the Civil
18 War in 1861 centered around regional differences between the North and South that
19 were based on the economic and social divergence caused by the existence of slavery;
20 and

21 WHEREAS, Abraham Lincoln, who was inaugurated as President of the United
22 States in 1861, believed and stated that the paramount objective of the Civil War was
23 to save the Union, rather than to destroy slavery, but in stating his wish that "all men

1 everywhere could be free," Lincoln added to the growing anticipation by slaves that
2 their ultimate liberation was at hand; and

3 WHEREAS, In 1862, the first clear signs that the end of slavery was imminent
4 came when laws abolishing slavery in the territories of Oklahoma, Nebraska,
5 Colorado, and New Mexico were passed; and

6 WHEREAS, By September 1862, President Lincoln warned the 11 rebellious
7 Confederate states that if they did not return to the Union by January 1, 1863, he
8 would declare their slaves "forever free" via the celebrated Emancipation
9 Proclamation; and

10 WHEREAS, Enforcement of the Emancipation Proclamation occurred only in
11 Confederate states under Union Army control; and

12 WHEREAS, Congress subsequently passed the Thirteenth Amendment to the
13 Constitution on January 31, 1865, abolishing slavery throughout the United States
14 and its territories; and

15 WHEREAS, News of this action reached the states at different times, and it was
16 not until June 19, 1864, that the message of freedom reached the slaves in Texas,
17 Oklahoma, Louisiana, Arkansas, and California; and

18 WHEREAS, Spontaneous celebrations erupted throughout the country when
19 African Americans learned of their freedom; and

20 WHEREAS, Juneteenth National Freedom Day, which recalls how slaves hated
21 slavery and celebrated its abolishment with excitement and great joy, serves as a
22 reminder to all Americans of the status and importance of Americans of African
23 descent; now, therefore, be it

24 RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the
25 Governor of Maryland, Parris N. Glendening, is urged to declare June 19, 2001, to be
26 Juneteenth National Freedom Day in Maryland; and be it further

27 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of
28 Legislative Services to the Honorable Parris N. Glendening, Governor of Maryland;
29 the Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr., President of the Senate of Maryland; and
30 the Honorable Casper R. Taylor, Jr., Speaker of the House of Delegates.