

HB0227 - 3.24.22-- (Opposite) State Government Le

Uploaded by: Donald Fry

Position: FAV



POSITION STATEMENT

**TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE SENATE EDUCATION, HEALTH,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**HOUSE BILL 227 – STATE GOVERNMENT – LEGAL AND EMPLOYEE HOLIDAY –
JUNETEENTH NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE DAY**

Delegate Harrison, et al

March 24, 2022

**DONALD C. FRY
PRESIDENT & CEO**

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

Position: Support

The Greater Baltimore Committee supports House Bill 227, which would designate June 19th as Juneteenth National Independence Day and would designate that day as a state legal holiday and state employee holiday.

While Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, 1862, this order was not recognized by southern states who had joined the Confederacy and thus did not have an immediate effect on all enslaved people. Even when the American Civil War ended, the emancipation of slaves was often dependent on the presence of Union soldiers to enforce the order. Thus, emancipation was a process that was both sluggish and inconsistent as Union troops gradually made their way through southern states. On June 19, 1865, Union Army General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas to enforce the emancipation of Texas' slaves.

Juneteenth has come to symbolize for many African Americans the triumph of human spirit over the cruelty of slavery. In 1997, the United States Senate adopted a joint resolution recognizing Juneteenth as the true Independence Day for African American citizens, and in recent years both the United States Senate and the House of Representatives have passed annual resolutions commemorating June 19 as Juneteenth Independence Day. The holiday is celebrated annually in 205 cities and commemorated in 49 states, including Maryland. It is designated as a paid state holiday in Texas, and has been declared a paid state holiday in seven states.

The Greater Baltimore Committee contends that it is important to the descendants of those freed blacks and slaves, all African Americans citizens of Maryland, and all citizens of Maryland regardless of their racial or ethnic background to recognize this pivotal moment in our country's history. As such, the GBC supports efforts to have Juneteenth formally recognized by the State.

For these reasons, the Greater Baltimore Committee urges a favorable report on House Bill 227.

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) is a non-partisan, independent, regional business advocacy organization comprised of hundreds of businesses -- large, medium and small -- educational institutions, nonprofit organizations and foundations located in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties as well as Baltimore City. The GBC is a 67-year-old, private-sector membership organization with a rich legacy of working with government to find solutions to problems that negatively affect our competitiveness and viability.

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

111 South Calvert Street • Suite 1700 • Baltimore, Maryland • 21202-6180

(410) 727-2820 • www.gbc.org

MCCR HB 227 Senate Testimony.03.24.22.pdf

Uploaded by: Glendora Hughes

Position: FAV

State of Maryland

Commission on Civil Rights

“Our vision is to have a State that is free from any trace of unlawful discrimination.”



Officers

Alvin O. Gillard, Executive Director
Cleveland L. Horton II, Deputy Director
Nicolette Young, Assistant Director
Glendora C. Hughes, General Counsel
Kara N. Hunt, Ph.D., Director of Education & Outreach

Governor
Larry Hogan
Lt. Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford
Commission Chairperson
Stephanie Suerth, MPA, CCEP
Commission Vice Chairperson
Janssen E. Evelyn, Esq.
Commissioners
Diane E. Bernier
Eileen M. Levitt, SPHR, SHRM-SCP
Rabbi Binyamin Marwick
Magdalena S. Navarro, MSc
Gary C. Norman, Esq.
Jeff Rosen
Gina McKnight-Smith, PharmD, MBA

March 24, 2022

**House Bill 227 – State Government – Legal and Employee Holiday –
Juneteenth National Freedom Day
POSITION: Support**

Dear Chairperson Pinsky, Vice Chairperson Kagan, and Members of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee:

The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (“MCCR”; “The Commission”) is the State agency responsible for the enforcement of laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, health services and state contracts based upon race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, physical and mental disability, and source of income.

House Bill 227 establishes Juneteenth National Freedom Day as a legal and State employee holiday on June 19. Currently, Juneteenth – also known as Freedom Day, Jubilee Day, Liberation Day, and Emancipation Day – is recognized throughout Maryland in various ways, such as executive proclamation and local community programming.

The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights supports HB 227 because June 19 celebrates the emancipation of those who had been enslaved in the United States. Specifically, this day commemorates the anniversary of Union Army General Gordon Granger’s announcement proclaiming freedom from slavery in Texas on June 19, 1865 – two and a half years after President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. For Marylanders, June 19 marks a unique and special independence day worthy of celebration and honor.

For these reasons, the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights urges a favorable vote on HB 227.

Thank you for your time and consideration of the information contained in this letter. The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights looks forward to the continued opportunity to work with you to improve and promote civil rights in Maryland.

HB_0277.PWojahn.fav.pdf

Uploaded by: Stephanie Anderson

Position: FAV



CITY OF COLLEGE PARK

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR & CITY COUNCIL

7401 BALTIMORE AVENUE SUITE 201 COLLEGE PARK MD 20740 | COLLEGEPAKMD.GOV

MAYOR

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Denise Mitchell

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301.852.8126

March 23, 2022

Senator Paul G. Pinsky
Chair of Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Support of HB 0227: State Government – Legal and Employee Holiday
– Juneteenth National Independence Day

Dear Chair Pinsky and Committee Members:

The City of College Park City Council voted unanimously on March 22, 2022, to support HB 0227 which would establish “Juneteenth National Independence Day” as a State legal and State employee holiday. This bill would follow on the actions of several Prince George’s County municipalities, as well as the county itself, in recognizing this landmark day for civil rights and equality.

Juneteenth commemorates a day when the abolition of slavery became a reality for many Americans. Although President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, freedom did not become a reality for many enslaved people for years. Juneteenth commemorates the day when Major General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas to enforce the emancipation of Texas’ slaves. This occasion started what is now the oldest known celebration commemorating the end of slavery in the United States.

Juneteenth marks the nation’s second Independence Day and should be recognized as a significant milestone in this country’s history. We appreciate the opportunity to comment and look forward to your support of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Patrick L. Wojahn
Mayor



CITY OF COLLEGE PARK

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR & CITY COUNCIL

7401 BALTIMORE AVENUE SUITE 201 COLLEGE PARK MD 20740 | COLLEGE PARKMD.GOV

MAYOR

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Denise Mitchell

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301.852.8126

HB227_Brentwood_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Therese Hessler

Position: FAV



January 28, 2022

Members of the Maryland State Assembly:

We are at an impasse in the history of this great country. Last year, President Joseph Biden, recognized June 19, 2021, also known as *the Juneteenth Day* for the 1st time in history on a national level.

Juneteenth (short for “June Nineteenth”) marks the day when Major General Gordon Granger and federal troops arrived in Galveston, Texas in 1865 to take control of the state and ensure that all enslaved people were freed. The troops’ arrival came a full two (2) and a half years after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863. Juneteenth honors the end to slavery in the United States and is considered the longest-running African American holiday.

For over 240 years this country maintained a system of slavery creating what was intended to be a permanent underclass. Much of the progress of this country was largely built by the labor of enslaved African Americans. The annual *Juneteenth* celebration pays homage to those countless millions of people and serves as a day of Memoriam.

To quote General Granger, “This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property, between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them, becomes that between employer and hired labor. The Freedmen were advised to remain at their present homes and work for wages. They were informed that they will not be allowed to collect at military posts, and they will not be supported in idleness either there or elsewhere.”

In 2021, many states, counties, cities, and towns recognized the annual *Juneteenth* celebration, but we also know that without legislation safeguarding this historic day, we stand to lose what gains were made. Therefore, the Town of Brentwood supports the official recognition of June 19th as *Juneteenth*, in the State of Maryland.

Sincerely,

Steffan Leggin, Vice Mayor

HB227_Brentwood_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Therese Hessler

Position: FAV



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Members of the Maryland State Assembly:

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Sincerely,

Steffan Leggin, Vice Mayor

HB227_CAPITOL HEIGHTS_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Therese Hessler

Position: FAV



Town of Capitol Heights

"A unique experience. Discover us!"

March 23, 2022

Senator Paul Pinsky, Chairman
Education, Housing and Environmental
Affairs Committee
Maryland State Senate
Annapolis, MD. 21041

RE: House Bill 227 – IN SUPPORT

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Committee Members,

The Town of Capitol Heights celebrates Juneteenth Day every year. It is an important date in the Town's yearly observances because it commemorates a day when the abolition of slavery in the United States became a reality for all Americans.

Although President Abraham Lincoln signed the Proclamation on January 1, 1863, freedom did not become a reality for many enslaved people for years after that date. Juneteenth commemorates the day when Major General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas and officially informed residents there that ALL enslaved people were free.

Juneteenth Day is now the oldest known celebration commemorating the end of slavery in the United States. For many, Juneteenth marks the second Independence Day that should be recognized as a milestone in this country's history.

The Town of Capitol Heights supports House Bill 227 that would recognize the importance of Juneteenth Day in the State of Maryland. Thank you for holding a hearing on this legislation.

Sincerely,

CAROLINE BROWN

Caroline Brown
Councilmember
Town Representative to PGCMA

Cc: Town Council

Vivian M. Dodson Municipal Center
One Capitol Heights Boulevard, Capitol Heights, Maryland 20743
(301) 336-0626 Office ~ (301) 336-8706 Facsimile
www.capitolheightsmd.com

HB227_Capitol HeightsCM_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Therese Hessler

Position: FAV

March 23, 2022
Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Committee
HB227 - SUPPORT

Chair Pinsky and Members of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Committee,

I am writing to ask for your support of HB227.

There are steps to atonement. When remorse for egregious actions are true healing can take place.

Recognition of Juneteenth is a trigger to that which deprives our nation of the gifts needed to save humanity.

The dignity restored by National recognition surpasses begins to restore trust that we want to overcome the racism, inequities and humanity for the humanity to survive.

Keep up the momentum of celebration ushered in last year by making Juneteenth a Holiday Nation Wide

Elaine Williams, CPM
Councilmember, Town of Capitol Heights
202- 765-8541

HB227_CHEVERLY_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Therese Hessler

Position: FAV

Maryland Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
March 24, 2022
HB227 - SUPPORT

Dear Chairman Paul Pinsky and Members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee,

I am writing **in support** today of House Bill 227 which would establish Juneteenth National Independence Day as a State Legal Holiday and a State employee holiday in Maryland.

Juneteenth is important because it commemorates a day when the abolition of slavery became a reality for many Americans. Juneteenth marks the nation's second Independence Day and should be recognized as a significant milestone in this country's history.

We have seen our federal government recognize and observe Juneteenth as a Federal holiday, and it seems only appropriate that the State follow suit.

I hope that you will support this measure and that Maryland will soon recognize Juneteenth as a holiday that we can commemorate and celebrate the abolition of slavery in America.

With Regards,

Amy Jean Chung
Fry(She/Hers)
Vice Mayor
Council Member Ward 6
Town Of Cheverly
6401 Forest Road
Cheverly, MD 20785
*Lands of the Piscataway &
Anacoston Tribes
301-678-3796
[CMWard6@Cheverly-
MD.gov](mailto:CMWard6@Cheverly-MD.gov)

HB227_GLENARDEN_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Therese Hessler

Position: FAV



City of Glenarden

March 24, 2022 - SENATE EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

House Bill 227 - SUPPORT

Dear Members of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee,

Erika L. Fareed, Councilmember for The City of Glenarden writes to express her support for House Bill 227, which would establish Juneteenth National Independence Day as a State legal holiday and a State employee holiday in Maryland. This bill would follow on the actions of several Prince George's County municipalities, as well as the county itself, in recognizing this landmark day for civil rights and equality.

Juneteenth is important because it commemorates a day when the abolition of slavery became a reality for many Americans. Although President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, freedom did not become a reality for many enslaved people for years. Juneteenth commemorates the day when Major General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston Texas and officially informed residents there that all enslaved people would be free. This occasion started what is now the oldest known celebration commemorating the end of slavery in the United States.

Juneteenth marks the nation's second Independence Day and should be recognized as a significant milestone in this country's history. We appreciate the opportunity to comment and look forward to your support of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

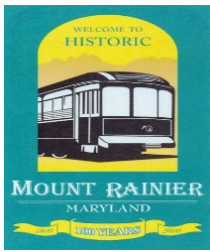
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Erika L. Fareed'.

Erika L. Fareed, Councilmember
The City of Glenarden

HB227_MT RAINIER_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Therese Hessler

Position: FAV



City of Mount Rainier

1 Municipal Place, Mount Rainier, Maryland 2071 Telephone: (301) 985-6585; Fax (301) 985-6595

March 22, 2022

Re: Support for House Bill 227, Establish Juneteenth National Independence Day as a State Employee Holiday in Maryland.

The Honorable Chairman Paul Pinsky and Members of the Education Housing and Environmental Affairs Committee

As Mayor of the City of Mount Rainier I would like the Committee to know that our City Council is in support of House Bill 227, which would establish Juneteenth National Independence Day as a State legal holiday and a State employee holiday in Maryland.

This bill would follow on the actions of the City of Mount Rainier and several Prince George's County municipalities, as well as the county itself, in recognizing this landmark day for civil rights and equality.

Juneteenth is important because it commemorates a day when the abolition of slavery became a reality for many Americans. Although President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, freedom did not become a reality for many enslaved people for years. Juneteenth commemorates the day when Major General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston Texas and officially informed residents there that all enslaved people would be free. This occasion started what is now the oldest known celebration commemorating the end of slavery in the United States.

For the Mount Rainier community, it is important this day is recognized. Last year for the first time in our History we raised Juneteenth Flag acknowledging this importance of that day as well as the great contributions our African American Community has given to our city. Juneteenth marks the nation's second Independence Day and should be recognized as a significant milestone in this country's history. We appreciate the opportunity to comment and look forward to your support of this important legislation.

We ask for a favorable vote on HB 227.

We want to thank you for your attention to this matter and your willingness to sponsor this bill. Any questions please feel free to reach out at Council@MountRainierMR.org

Sincerely,

Celina Benitez

Mayor Celina R. Benitez, City of Mount Rainier
On behalf of Mount Rainier Council

HB227_PGCMA_SUPPORT.pdf

Uploaded by: Therese Hessler

Position: FAV



Prince George's County Municipal Association
An Association Of 27 Municipalities



House Bill 227 - SUPPORT - March 23, 2022 - Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

Chair Pinsky and Members of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee,

The Prince George's County Municipal Association writes to express our support for House Bill 227, which would establish Juneteenth National Independence Day as a State legal holiday and a State employee holiday in Maryland. This bill would follow on the actions of several Prince George's County municipalities, as well as the county itself, in recognizing this landmark day for civil rights and equality.

Juneteenth is important because it commemorates a day when the abolition of slavery became a reality for many Americans. Although President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, freedom did not become a reality for many enslaved people for years. Juneteenth commemorates the day when Major General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston Texas and officially informed residents there that all enslaved people would be free. This occasion started what is now the oldest known celebration commemorating the end of slavery in the United States.

Juneteenth marks the nation's second Independence Day and should be recognized as a significant milestone in this country's history. We appreciate the opportunity to comment and look forward to your support of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Patrick L. Wojahn", is written over a horizontal line.

Patrick L. Wojahn

HB227_SEAT PLEASANT_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Therese Hessler

Position: FAV



City of Seat Pleasant

"A Smart City of Excellence"

Office of the Mayor

March 23, 2022

House Bill 227 – SUPPORT

Delegate Pendergrass and Member of the House Health and Government Operations Committee,

The City of Seat Pleasant writes to express our support for House Bill 227, which would establish Juneteenth National Independence Day as a State legal holiday and a State employee holiday in Maryland. This bill would follow on the actions of several Prince George's County municipalities, as well as the county itself, in recognizing this landmark day for civil rights and equality. Juneteenth is important because it commemorates a day when the abolition of slavery became a reality for many Americans. Although President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, freedom did not become a reality for many enslaved people for years. Juneteenth commemorates the day when Major General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston Texas and officially informed residents there that all enslaved people would be free. This occasion started what is now the oldest known celebration commemorating the end of slavery in the United States.

Juneteenth marks the nation's second Independence Day and should be recognized as a significant milestone in this country's history. We appreciate the opportunity to comment and look forward to your support of this important legislation.

Best Wishes,

DocuSigned by:

Shireka McCarthy

0CF09FCED95A46A...

Shireka McCarthy

Vice Mayor

HB227_TOWNOFRIVERDALE_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Therese Hessler

Position: FAV

TOWN OF RIVERDALE PARK



March 23, 2022

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky
Chair, Education, Housing, and Environmental Affairs Committee
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Support - House Bill 227 - State Government – Legal and Employee Holiday – Juneteenth National Independence Day

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Members of the Education, Housing, and Environmental Affairs Committee:

The Town of Riverdale Park strongly support House Bill 227 - State Government – Legal and Employee Holiday – Juneteenth National Independence Day, which would establish Juneteenth National Independence Day as a State legal and employee holiday on June 19th and repeal the requirement that the Governor annually proclaim June 19th as Juneteenth National Freedom Day.

On June 2, 2020, the Mayor and Council adopted Resolution 2020-R-18 establishing a commitment to policies, programs, and initiatives that aim to undo the effects of systemic racism and unequivocally support and defend African Americans and Black people. On October 5, 2020, the Mayor and Council acted to establish Juneteenth as a Town holiday.

Juneteenth is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the emancipation of slavery in Texas and the United States. Juneteenth, a portmanteau word, combines June and nineteenth. Juneteenth originated in Galveston, Texas as a response to General Gordon Granger's pronouncement on June 19, 1865, that "... in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves." Reportedly, the announcement was necessary because many did not know of the Emancipation Proclamation issued in January 1863. The 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution that abolished slavery was ratified in December 1865. Juneteenth is recognized as a state holiday or special day of remembrance in 43 states and the District of Columbia. Juneteenth needs to be recognized as State legal holiday in the State of Maryland.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this important legislation. If you require any additional information, please contact me at jnlestitian@riverdaleparkmd.gov.

Sincerely,

Town of Riverdale Park

John N. Lestitian, Town Manager

TOWN OF RIVERDALE PARK



HB227_Upper Marlboro_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Therese Hessler

Position: FAV



Town of Upper Marlboro

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Janice Duckett
Treasurer

Karen Lott
Commissioner

Sarah Franklin
President

Thomas Hanchett
Commissioner

Vacant
Commissioner

March 24, 2022

Senator Pinsky, Chair
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Delegate Chair Pinsky and Members of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs ,

I am writing to express the Town of Upper Marlboro's Support for House Bill 227, establishing "Juneteenth National Independence Day" as a State legal and employee holiday. This bill would recognize the independence of all members of our Nation and create time when all residents can feel joy for freedom.

Slavery was abolished in Maryland on November 1, 1864. This is prior to June 19, 1865 when residents, formerly two groups—enslaved and free, were informed that they were all free. It is unifying to the Country to have one day to celebrate true freedom for our Nation together. Juneteenth commemorates the point at which abolition of slavery became real for enslaved African Americans. The celebration of Juneteenth is also the oldest known celebration commemorating the end of slavery in the United States.

June 19th is as important a holiday as July 4th, and should be treated as such. While one celebrates the independence of one nation from another, the other celebrates the independence of a nation from the institution of slavery. We, as a nation, continue to struggle to grapple with true equality. A celebration of freedom brings us closer to the goal of creating a truly united country where all are equal in freedom.

Thank you for your support for this bill.

Sarah Franklin

HB227MBMsupport.pdf

Uploaded by: Therese Hessler

Position: FAV



March 24, 2022

RE: HB227 Support

To: Chair Pinsky and Members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

The Maryland Black Mayors Inc. writes to express our support for House Bill 227, which would establish Juneteenth National Independence Day as a State legal holiday and a State employee holiday in Maryland. This bill would follow on the actions of several Prince George's County municipalities, as well as the county itself, in recognizing this landmark day for civil rights and equality. Juneteenth is important because it commemorates a day when the abolition of slavery became a reality for many Americans. Although President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, freedom did not become a reality for many enslaved people for years. Juneteenth commemorates the day when Major General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston Texas and officially informed residents there that all enslaved people would be free.

This occasion started what is now the oldest known celebration commemorating the end of slavery in the United States. Juneteenth marks the nation's second Independence Day and should be recognized as a significant milestone in this country's history. We appreciate the opportunity to comment and look forward to your support of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Johnathan Medlock

President

HB227_Del_Harrison_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Vernita Johnson

Position: FAV



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

House Bill 227

Testimony to be offered to the Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
March 24, 2022

Good Afternoon Chairman Pinsky, Madam Vice-Chair Kagan and members of the Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee. For the record, I am Delegate Andrea Fletcher Harrison here to present HB 227, An Act concerning State Government – Legal and Employee Holiday-Juneteenth National Freedom Day, respectfully requesting a favorable report on this bill.

As we know, Juneteenth commemorates the date, June 19th, 1865--two and half years after the Emancipation Proclamation and two months after the end of the Civil War--when hundreds of thousands of enslaved men and women in Texas finally learned they had been freed. It is an important milestone in American culture. It represents the resilience and valiant efforts of black Americans.

On June 17, 2021, President Joe Biden signed the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act making June 19th a US federal Holiday commemorating the end of slavery in the United States. All but three states in the country recognize Juneteenth with Maryland being a part of the 47 who acknowledge it. Sponsored by former Delegate Melvin Stukes and signed into law in 2014, it is considered a day of commemoration. In the final "Whereas" clause in Chapter 602 (House Bill 549, 2014) which made Juneteenth a commemorative day in the State of Maryland, it reads, "Whereas, Juneteenth National Freedom Day, which recalls how slaves hated slavery and celebrated its abolishment with excitement and great joy, serves as a reminder to all Americans of the status and importance of Americans of African descent; now therefore...Be it enacted..." that the Governor annually shall proclaim June 19th as Juneteenth National Freedom Day. Outside of recognition, little effort has been made in Maryland to honor and appreciate the adversities of blacks who built this state by way of their servitude.

While joyful black Americans celebrate Juneteenth every year, it's not always welcomed or celebrated outside the black community. In the likeness of MLK day, it's time for us to celebrate this as a paid state holiday no matter your racial identity. The abolishment of slavery didn't signify the end of racism, but the start of black people's fight with systematic oppression. The

road to equality is long, but Juneteenth should serve as a reminder that current and future generations are the solution. Four hundred and two years after the abolishment of slavery, 40 million Black Americans continue to fight against the racism their ancestors faced. Juneteenth is an important day to recognize, celebrate, observe, and realize we have not properly addressed our past as a state, let alone as a nation.

Making Juneteenth a state holiday, joining Virginia, Texas, New York, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts, is a step that we as lawmakers can do to show we recognize, empathize and value the plight of black people in Maryland, and appreciate their past and continued contributions to our great State. Becoming a state holiday will not merely give employees a day off, but will give residents a day to think of the future we want while remembering the inequities of the past. It will help us all reflect on how far we have come as a nation and how much more we must do for humankind.

With this being said, Chairman Pinsky and members of the committee, I again respectfully request a favorable report on HB 227.

Respectfully submitted by,

Delegate Andrea Harrison