

January 28, 2022

The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass, Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Establishing Juneteenth National Independence Day, House Bill 227, Sponsor Delegate Andrea Harrison, Supporting HB227

Dear Chair, Health and Government Operations:

I am Marverly Nettles, a community activist, a public servant, and an elected official here in Cheverly, Maryland.

I support the urgency to move this bill to a vote because it is a significant date in our American history that should be recognized, acknowledged, and celebrated here in our State as an official paid holiday for our employees. President Biden signed a bill, last year to establish June 19th as a federal holiday. My Town has also added Juneteenth to our Code as a paid holiday for our employees. There is no reason why our state should not also recognize this day of Emancipation for African-Americans. Although establishing the holiday does not substitute for the substantive action, it does however recognize the reason why this State continues to work against systematic inequality.

I strongly support this bill because it celebrates the day African-Americans who were enslaved and used as property, discounting their existence as human beings, were freed. Although on June 19, 1865 enslaved humans were given their freedom on paper and not in practice, it was the first step towards a long journey of disparities that African and Black Americans continue to overcome. Please move and pass this bill as a forward step in that journey.

I am urging you to move this bill forward so that we can recognize this significant day in our American history here in Maryland.

Sincerely,
Marverly K. Nettles
Council Member
Town of Cheverly
Ward One