ENGROSSED SENATE
JOINT
RESOLUTION NO. 21

By: Horner, Roberts, Brown, Monson and Williams (Penny) of the Senate

and

Ross of the House

A Joint Resolution relating to Juneteenth National Freedom Day; amending 25 O.S. 1991, Section 82.2, which relates to additional holidays; designating the third Saturday in June of each year as an official holiday; providing for codification; directing distribution; and declaring an emergency.

WHEREAS, more than 130 years old, Juneteenth National Freedom Day is the oldest and only African American holiday observance in the United States. Also known as "Emancipation Day," "Emancipation Celebration," "Freedom Day," "Jun-Jun" and "Juneteenth." Juneteenth National Freedom Day commemorates the strong survival instinct of African Americans who were first brought to this country stacked in the bottom of slave ships in a month-long journey across the Atlantic Ocean known as the "Middle Passage;" and

WHEREAS, approximately eleven and one-half million African Americans survived the voyage to the New World - the number that died is likely greater - only to be subjected to whipping, castration, branding and rape, and forced to submit to slavery for more than 200 years after their arrival in the United States; and

WHEREAS, events in the history of the United States which led to the Civil War of 1861 centered around sectional differences between the North and South that were based on the economic and social divergence caused by the existence of slavery. The election

of Abraham Lincoln as President in 1861, a President committed to saving the Union, who stated that if he could save the Union without freeing one slave he would, which added to a growing anticipation by slaves that their ultimate liberation was at hand; and

WHEREAS, in 1862, the first clear signs that the end of slavery was imminent came when laws abolishing slavery in the territories of Oklahoma, Nebraska, Colorado and New Mexico were passed. In September of that same year, President Lincoln warned the eleven rebellious Confederate States that if they did not return to the Union by January 1, 1863, he would declare their slaves "forever free" via the celebrated "Emancipation Proclamation"; and

WHEREAS, enforcement of the "Emancipation Proclamation", however, only occurred in Confederate States once under Union Army control. Congress subsequently passed the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution on January 31, 1865, abolishing slavery throughout the United States and its territories. News of this action reached the states at different times, and it was not until June 19, 1865, that the message of freedom reached the slaves in Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Arkansas and California; and

WHEREAS, spontaneous celebrations erupted throughout the country when African Americans learned of their freedom. Juneteenth National Freedom Day demonstrates that slaves hated slavery and celebrated its abolishment with excitement and great joy. It is a reminder to all Americans of the status and importance of Americans of African descent as American citizens.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE 2ND SESSION OF THE 44TH OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE:

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 25 O.S. 1991, Section 82.2, is amended to read as follows:

Section 82.2 The following additional days are designated as holidays:

Jefferson Day on the 13th day of April; Oklahoma Day on the 22d day of April; Mother's Day on the second Sunday in May; Juneteenth National Freedom Day on the third Saturday in June; Indian Day on the first Saturday after the full moon in September; Cherokee Strip Day on the 16th day of September; Will Rogers Day on the 4th day of November; Citizenship Recognition Day on such date as may be fixed by the Governor; Oklahoma Historical Day on the 10th day of October; Senior Citizens' Day the 9th day of June; Youth Day on the third Sunday in March each year; each day in which a state election is held throughout the State of Oklahoma; and such other days as may be designated by the President of the United States or the Governor of the State of Oklahoma. Notwithstanding the day designated for Veterans' Day by Section 82.1 of this title, any bank, savings and loan association or credit union may observe the fourth Monday in October as Veterans' Day. Any act authorized, required or permitted to be performed on any holiday as designated in this section may and shall be performed on said day the same as on any business day; provided any state, national or federal reserve bank, building and loan association, credit union, state, federal, county or municipal office may close on any day designated in this section as a holiday, and, upon such bank, building and loan association, credit union, or public office being closed on such day, any act authorized, required or permitted to be performed at or by such bank, building and loan association, credit union, public office or public official may be performed on the next succeeding business day and no liability or loss of rights of any kind shall result from such delay.

SECTION 2. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 82.4 of Title 25, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

The third Saturday in June of each year is hereby declared an official holiday, to be known as "Juneteenth National Freedom Day."

SECTION 3. The Secretary of State is hereby directed to distribute copies of this resolution to the Governor, the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

SECTION 4. It being immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is hereby declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

Passed the Senate the 2nd day of March, 1994.

President of the Senate

Passed the House of Representatives the ____ day of _____, 1994.

Speaker of the House of Representatives