

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 11-0293R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmembers Conaway, Henry, Stokes, Cole, Middleton, Kraft, Branch,
Clarke, Reisinger, Curran, Holton, Welch, Spector
Introduced and adopted: June 6, 2011

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION CONCERNING

In Support of Annual Observance of Juneteenth

1
2 FOR the purpose of calling for an official Baltimore observance of Juneteenth on June 19th, 2011;
3 supporting State Legislation to be introduced in the 2012 Session of the Maryland General
4 Assembly naming June 19th an annual State observance of Juneteenth; respectfully urging the
5 President of the United States to issue a Presidential Proclamation to declare Juneteenth a
6 National Day of Observance, and exhorting the Maryland Delegation to the 112th U.S.
7 Congress to support legislation to proclaim Juneteenth a national day of observance of the
8 date enslavement ended in America.

Recitals

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10 More than 10 years ago, the City Council adopted a resolution in support of proposed State
11 legislation that sought to make June 19th a legal State holiday celebration of Juneteenth,
12 commemorating “June 19, 1865, 10 weeks after Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered
13 at Appomatox, Union Major General Gordon Granger rode into Galveston, Texas and drove the
14 last nail of freedom into slavery’s ignoble coffin, proclaiming – The people of Texas are
15 informed all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of rights of property between
16 master and slave.”

17 The resolution continues: “General Granger’s proclamation ignited a chain of spontaneous
18 freedom celebrations that spread across state and throughout the southwest. These celebrations
19 were by a people whose entire race, as it existed in America, had been torn from their homeland
20 and deposited on foreign soil, robbed of their birthright and family structure, and subjected to the
21 chains of bondage and the indignity of servitude. African-Americans, whose only hope of
22 freedom had come with the cold reality of death, for the first time were able to rejoice in the
23 hope of a better future in this life.”

24 Although the legislation proposed in Maryland did not pass, the 2011 National Juneteenth
25 Holiday Campaign Chair reports that 36 other states now recognize Juneteenth as a state holiday
26 or state holiday observance day. In addition to Maryland, the other states that do not recognize
27 Juneteenth are Alabama, Arizona, Georgia, Hawaii, Maine, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire,
28 North Dakota, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, and Utah.

29 On May 10, 2011, the Kansas Senate unanimously adopted a resolution recognizing the
30 observance of an annual Juneteenth Day, citing, in part: “Many African-Americans continue the
31 tradition of celebrating Juneteenth as inspiration and encouragement for future generations, and
32 for more than 140 years, Juneteenth Day celebrations have been held to honor African-American
33 freedom while encouraging self-development and respect for all cultures. The faith and strength

EXPLANATION: Underlining indicates matter added by amendment.
~~Strike out~~ indicates matter deleted by amendment.

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1 of character demonstrated by former slaves remains an example for all people of the United
2 States, regardless of background, religion, or race.

3 National Campaign officials predict that this year 40 states will observe Juneteenth and that,
4 at long last, the President of the United States will proclaim Juneteenth a National Observance
5 Day. As a City and a State, we enjoy a rich African-American history and have benefitted
6 significantly from the contributions of a people once enslaved. It would be unconscionable to
7 continue to officially ignore the end of that enslavement.

8 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That this
9 Body calls for an official Baltimore observance of Juneteenth on June 19th, 2011; supports State
10 Legislation to be introduced in the 2012 Session of the Maryland General Assembly naming
11 June 19th an annual state observance of Juneteenth; respectfully urges the President of the United
12 States to issue a Presidential Proclamation to declare Juneteenth a National Day of Observance,
13 and exhorts the Maryland Delegation to the 112th U.S. Congress to support legislation to
14 proclaim Juneteenth a national day of observance of the date enslavement ended in America.

15 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the President, the
16 Mayor, the Governor, the Honorable Members of the Maryland Congressional Delegation, the
17 Honorable Chairs and Members of the Baltimore City Senate and House Delegations to the 2011
18 Session of the Maryland General Assembly, the Chair of the 2011 National Juneteenth Holiday
19 Campaign, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.