

By: Reynolds

H.R. No. 1699

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The Missouri City Juneteenth Celebration Foundation
2 (MCJCF) is commemorating Juneteenth, the historic date that
3 signifies the end of slavery in Texas, with five days of
4 family-oriented events; and

5 WHEREAS, Although the Emancipation Proclamation, issued by
6 President Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863, formally outlawed
7 slavery in areas of the country that were still in rebellion, true
8 emancipation was not achieved in the South until the end of the
9 Civil War, when Union troops brought enforcement of the decree to
10 the states of the Confederacy; on June 19, 1865, two months after
11 the war ended, Major General Gordon Granger of the Union Army
12 arrived in Galveston and issued General Order Number 3, informing
13 the people of Texas that all slaves were now free; and

14 WHEREAS, Compliance with the order on the part of slave
15 owners was often slow, and it would take months before all of those
16 held in bondage would obtain their freedom; by the end of the year,
17 however, the approximately 250,000 men, women, and children in
18 Texas who had been enslaved were beginning new lives as free
19 citizens; the shock that many of them felt upon first learning of
20 their freedom quickly turned to jubilation, and they continued to
21 express their joy and reverence for this momentous day with
22 celebrations in the years following the Civil War; and

23 WHEREAS, With their newfound freedom, many slaves
24 immediately left their former owners and struck out in search of

1 opportunity and a chance to use their talents as they saw fit; free
2 to travel, many began searching for the family members that had been
3 taken from them; they also formed communities, schools, and
4 churches, creating institutions and networks that would sustain
5 them through the difficult years ahead; and

6 WHEREAS, Juneteenth festivities became a vital part of
7 African American culture, and entire communities began to
8 commemorate June 19, 1865, and the pivotal role it played in our
9 state's history; an annual remembrance of the slaves' long-awaited
10 release from bondage, it became a time when families would put on
11 their finest clothes and gather to enjoy food, parades, and other
12 festivities, while reflecting on all that had been endured and
13 overcome; over the years, Texans carried the celebration of
14 Juneteenth with them to neighboring states, and awareness of this
15 historic day continues to grow throughout our country with each
16 passing year; and

17 WHEREAS, In recognition of the date's significance, the Texas
18 Legislature passed a bill in 1979 making Juneteenth an official
19 state holiday, effective January 1, 1980; and

20 WHEREAS, The Missouri City Juneteenth Celebration features a
21 series of free educational and cultural events, including a
22 historical reenactment, a parade, a golf tournament, a health and
23 wellness fair, and a musical festival; the flagship program of the
24 celebration is the Community Service Awards Gala and Reception,
25 which honors those who have made a significant contribution to Fort
26 Bend County and its citizens; and

27 WHEREAS, The Missouri City Juneteenth Celebration provides a

1 welcome opportunity to mark the end of slavery while paying homage
2 to the immeasurable legacy of the African American community in the
3 Lone Star State; now, therefore, be it

4 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 82nd Texas
5 Legislature hereby commemorate the annual Missouri City Juneteenth
6 Celebration and extend to the Missouri City Juneteenth Celebration
7 Foundation sincere best wishes for a successful event; and, be it
8 further

9 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
10 prepared for the foundation as an expression of high regard by the
11 Texas House of Representatives.