



Cheryl Davila
Councilmember
District 2

ACTION CALENDAR
January 26, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmembers Cheryl Davila (Author)

Subject: Declare Juneteenth as a City Holiday for the City of Berkeley

RECOMMENDATION

1. Adopt a resolution declaring Juneteenth as a City Holiday for the City of Berkeley
2. Send copies of this resolution to State Assemblywoman Buffy Wicks, State Senator Nancy Skinner, and United States Congresswoman Barbara Lee.

POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

This item expired on December 14, 2020, and is returning to Council with no action taken by the Budget and Finance Policy Committee.

BACKGROUND

Juneteenth, slaves received the news of their liberation more than two years after President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation went into effect on January 1, 1863; African Americans across the state were made aware of their right to freedom on June 19, 1865, when Major General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston with federal troops to read General Order No. 3 announcing the end of the Civil War and that all enslaved people.

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo recently issued an [Executive Order](#) recognizing Juneteenth as a holiday for state employees, in recognition of the official emancipation of African Americans throughout the United States. The Governor will also advance legislation to make Juneteenth an official state holiday next year. The City of Berkeley should follow Governor Cuomo's lead and ask Governor Newsome to do the same. California has a tradition of acknowledging significant milestones in advancing the cause of freedom, and some of whom descend directly from those brave men and women that gained freedom on that day, join in celebrating the 155th anniversary of Juneteenth, an observance that commemorates the official announcement made in the State of Texas regarding the abolition of slavery and the freeing of some quarter-million African Americans.

The observance of Juneteenth honors the history, perseverance, and achievements of African Americans, and celebrates America's progress and continuing commitment to realizing the principles of liberty and equality upon which our nation was founded.

This observance is a reminder of the hardships and losses suffered by African Americans in

their struggle to attain freedom, and we pay tribute to the memory of those who made the ultimate sacrifice in this quest; through their experiences and those of others who were successful in achieving victory, we find among the most poignant and valuable lessons of humankind that continue to resonate with people of all backgrounds.

The official emancipation of African Americans throughout the United States literally and figuratively opened doors of opportunity that enabled following generations to contribute immeasurably to our nation's richness, equality of citizens, and global leadership, and today communities across our state – from Brooklyn to Buffalo – mark the anniversary of Juneteenth with appropriate commemoration.

Juneteenth is not just a Black liberation day, but a day of American liberation in a deep sense possibly further than the Fourth of July. It is fitting that all join to commemorate such an important day in our nation's history, as we take this opportunity to reflect upon and rejoice in the freedom and civil rights that we all share as Americans.

The City of Berkeley for decades has celebrated Juneteenth on the streets on Adeline and Martin Luther King Jr. Way. Berkeley has recognized Malcolm X Birthday Day as a City Holiday, and it is time Juneteenth is added to be recognized as a City Holiday.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

None.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Protecting our communities during this climate and health crisis is an act of environmental sustainability.

CONTACT PERSON

Cheryl Davila
Councilmember District 2
510.981.7120
cdavila@cityofberkeley.info

Sanjita Pamidimukkala
District 2 Intern
925.984.9435
dh.spamidimukkala@students.srvusd.net

Eshal Sandhu
District 2 Intern
925.255.6608
dh.esandhu@students.srvusd.net

ATTACHMENTS

1. Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL FOR THE CITY OF BERKELEY DECLARING JUNETEENTH AS A CITY HOLIDAY.

WHEREAS, Juneteenth, slaves received the news of their liberation more than two years after President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation went into effect on January 1, 1863; African Americans across the state were made aware of their right to freedom on June 19, 1865, when Major General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston with federal troops to read General Order No. 3 announcing the end of the Civil War and that all enslaved people; and

WHEREAS, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo recently issued an [Executive Order](#) recognizing Juneteenth as a holiday for state employees, in recognition of the official emancipation of African Americans throughout the United States. The Governor will also advance legislation to make Juneteenth an official state holiday next year. The City of Berkeley should follow Governor Cuomo's lead and ask Governor Newsome to do the same. California has a tradition of acknowledging significant milestones in advancing the cause of freedom, and some of whom descend directly from those brave men and women that gained freedom on that day, join in celebrating the 155th anniversary of Juneteenth, an observance that commemorates the official announcement made in the State of Texas regarding the abolition of slavery and the freeing of some quarter-million African Americans; and

WHEREAS, The observance of Juneteenth honors the history, perseverance, and achievements of African Americans, and celebrates America's progress and continuing commitment to realizing the principles of liberty and equality upon which our nation was founded; and

WHEREAS, This observance is a reminder of the hardships and losses suffered by African Americans in their struggle to attain freedom, and we pay tribute to the memory of those who made the ultimate sacrifice in this quest; through their experiences and those of others who were successful in achieving victory, we find among the most poignant and valuable lessons of humankind that continue to resonate with people of all backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, This observance is a reminder of the hardships and losses suffered by African Americans in their struggle to attain freedom, and we pay tribute to the memory of those who made the ultimate sacrifice in this quest; through their experiences and those of others who were successful in achieving victory, we find among the most poignant and valuable lessons of humankind that continue to resonate with people of all backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, The official emancipation of African Americans throughout the United States literally and figuratively opened doors of opportunity that enabled following generations to contribute immeasurably to our nation's richness, equality of citizens, and global leadership, and today communities across our state – from Brooklyn to Buffalo – mark the anniversary of Juneteenth with appropriate commemoration; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth is not just a Black liberation day, but a day of American liberation in a

deep sense possibly further than the Fourth of July. It is fitting that all join to commemorate such an important day in our nation's history, as we take this opportunity to reflect upon and rejoice in the freedom and civil rights that we all share as Americans; and

WHEREAS, The City of Berkeley for decades has celebrated Juneteenth on the streets on Adeline and Martin Luther King Jr. Way. Berkeley has recognized Malcolm X Birthday Day as a City Holiday, and it is time Juneteenth is added to be recognized as a City Holiday; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council for the City of Berkeley recognize June 19 of every year as Juneteenth, which shall be a holiday for city employees, who if not required to work, shall be entitled to leave at full pay without charge to existing accruals and for those employees who are required to work, they shall receive one day of compensatory time.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution are sent to State Assemblywoman Buffy Wicks, State Senator Nancy Skinner, and United States Congresswoman Barbara Lee.