

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 2128 Session of 2014

INTRODUCED BY HELM, WATERS, KIRKLAND, HENNESSEY, BISHOP, KIM, CALTAGIRONE, V. BROWN, KORTZ, LONGIETTI, WHEATLEY, KILLION, READSHAW, RAPP, VEREB, B. BOYLE, TURZAI, MILLARD, REED, BOBACK, GRELL, KAVULICH, YOUNGBLOOD, MCNEILL, GROVE, MIRABITO, HARHART, KAUFFMAN, KINSEY, SWANGER, ROCK, GINGRICH, FRANKEL, MAJOR, GIBBONS, BROWNLEE, MAHONEY, MARSICO, GOODMAN, MURT, WATSON, DIGIROLAMO, PAINTER, FLECK, MCCARTER, COHEN, KOTIK, MCGINNIS, R. BROWN, SCAVELLO, LUCAS, SONNEY, BAKER, O'NEILL, CUTLER, HARPER, DELOZIER, MALONEY, HAHN, SAYLOR, ROEBUCK, DENLINGER, GAINEY, MIRANDA, THOMAS AND OBERLANDER, MARCH 25, 2014

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON URBAN AFFAIRS, MARCH 25, 2014

AN ACT

1 Providing for the annual designation and holiday observance of  
 2 the third Saturday in June as "Juneteenth National Freedom  
 3 Day" in this Commonwealth.

4 The General Assembly hereby finds and declares as follows:

5 (1) Originating in Galveston, Texas, on June 19, 1865,  
 6 when slaves in that state learned that they had been freed,  
 7 "Juneteenth National Freedom Day" is the oldest African-  
 8 American holiday observance in the United States.

9 (2) "Juneteenth National Freedom Day" commemorates the  
 10 survival instinct of Africans who endured a transatlantic  
 11 journey, known as the Middle Passage, on slave ships from  
 12 their homeland to this country.

13 (3) Approximately 11.5 million Africans survived the  
 14 harsh voyage to slave markets in the New World during the

1 late 17th century, and the slave population in the American  
2 colonies grew quickly.

3 (4) "Juneteenth National Freedom Day" further  
4 commemorates the impact of slavery, the abolition movement  
5 and African-American emancipation in the United States and  
6 has become a traditional celebration of independence, human  
7 rights and African-American culture in many communities.

8 (5) Recognition of "Juneteenth National Freedom Day" in  
9 this Commonwealth would encourage all governmental entities,  
10 civic organizations, schools and institutions of higher  
11 education in this Commonwealth to observe the day in a manner  
12 that emphasizes the meaning and importance of the  
13 emancipation proclamation that ended slavery in the United  
14 States and to recognize and celebrate the importance of this  
15 day to every person who cherishes liberty and equality for  
16 all people.

17 (6) "Juneteenth National Freedom Day" is celebrated  
18 annually in at least 37 states nationwide.

19 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
20 hereby enacts as follows:

21 Section 1. Designation.

22 The third Saturday in June is designated as "Juneteenth  
23 National Freedom Day" in this Commonwealth.

24 Section 2. Effective date.

25 This act shall take effect immediately.