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JOINT RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE ANNUAL WASHINGTON JUNETEENTH NATIONAL HOLIDAY OBSERVANCE

WHEREAS, for more than 143 years, Juneteenth National Freedom Day, also known as Emancipation Day, Emancipation Celebration, Freedom Day, Juneteenth Independence Day and Juneteenth, has been one of the most recognized African-American holiday observances in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth commemorates the day freedom was proclaimed to all slaves in the South by Union General Gordon Granger, on June 19, 1865 in Galveston, Texas, more than 2 1/2 years after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation by President Abraham Lincoln; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth commemorates the determination of the first people from Africa, approximately 11,500,000 of whom survived the awful voyages across the Atlantic and who were brought to this country to serve as slaves and whose descendants served as slaves for 200 years before the horrific system was abolished; and

WHEREAS, over 130 years after the Emancipation Proclamation and after years of informal annual celebration, Juneteenth was finally officially recognized in 1997 as Juneteenth Independence Day in America by the President of the United States and the United States Congress in the first session of the 105th Congress with bipartisan cooperation in Senate Joint Resolution 11 and House Joint Resolution 56; and

WHEREAS, "Until All are Free, None are Free" is an oft-repeated maxim that can be used to highlight the significance of the end of the era of slavery in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the National Juneteenth Observance Foundation is sponsoring the premier celebration, concert, worship services and campaign to commemorate what many people consider to be America's 2nd Independence Day Observance, the "19th of June," and to recognize this country's movement towards a "One America"; and

WHEREAS, it is important to continue a dialogue of the realization of what Juneteenth historically means to all Americans, to promote racial healing, reconciliation, restoration and justice; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Twenty-fourth Legislature now assembled in the Second Regular Session, on behalf of the people we represent, support the National Juneteenth Holiday campaign and encourage people in our State to participate in the Annual Washington Juneteenth National Holiday Observance during the week of June 19th in Washington, D.C.