

Second Regular Session
Seventy-third General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO

INTRODUCED

LLS NO. 22-0863.01 Jessica Herrera x4218

SENATE BILL 22-139

SENATE SPONSORSHIP

Buckner and Coleman,

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

Herod,

Senate Committees

State, Veterans, & Military Affairs

House Committees

A BILL FOR AN ACT

101 CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF JUNETEENTH AS A STATE
102 HOLIDAY.

Bill Summary

(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at <http://leg.colorado.gov>.)

The bill establishes Juneteenth as a state legal holiday.

1 *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:*

2 **SECTION 1. Legislative declaration.** (1) The general assembly

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.
Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing statute.
Dashes through the words indicate deletions from existing statute.

1 hereby finds and declares that:

2 (a) Juneteenth National Independence Day, commonly known as
3 Juneteenth, officially became the 11th federal holiday on June 17, 2021,
4 and the first holiday to be added to the list of federal holidays since the
5 recognition of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday in 1983;

6 (b) Juneteenth marks our country's second Independence day.
7 Although it has long been celebrated in the African American community,
8 this monumental event remains largely unknown to most Americans. For
9 decades, many southern Black communities were forced to celebrate
10 Juneteenth on the outskirts of town due to racism and Jim Crow laws.
11 Early Juneteenth celebrations included church services, public readings
12 of the Emancipation Proclamation, and social events like rodeos and
13 dances.

14 (c) Juneteenth, also known as Jubilee Day, Freedom Day, and
15 Emancipation Day, commemorates June 19, 1865, when Union soldiers,
16 led by Major General Gordon Granger, arrived in Galveston, Texas, and
17 announced the end of the Civil War and declared that more than two
18 hundred fifty thousand enslaved Black people were free. Many enslavers
19 in the state of Texas and other states had continued to hold enslaved
20 people captive despite the Emancipation Proclamation having been issued
21 by President Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863.

22 (d) On "Freedom's Eve", or the eve of January 1, 1863, the first
23 Watch Night services took place. On that night, enslaved and free African
24 Americans gathered in churches and private homes all across the country
25 awaiting news that the Emancipation Proclamation had taken effect. At
26 the stroke of midnight, prayers were answered as all enslaved people in
27 Confederate states were declared legally free. Union soldiers, many of

1 whom were Black, marched onto plantations and across cities in the south
2 reading small copies of the Emancipation Proclamation and spreading the
3 news of freedom in Confederate states.

4 (e) However, the news did not spread across many areas of the
5 nation, and slavery was not officially abolished nationally until the
6 ratification of the 13th Amendment to the constitution of the United
7 States. Juneteenth celebrations commemorate the liberation of men and
8 women and their descendants who were enslaved in areas that were not
9 made aware of the effect of the Emancipation Proclamation until almost
10 two and a half years later.

11 (f) Therefore, the general assembly declares the designation of
12 Juneteenth as a state legal holiday in remembrance of the rejoicement of
13 the day Black slaves in Texas and other states learned of their freedom.
14 The historical legacy of Juneteenth shows the value of never giving up
15 hope in uncertain times.

16 **SECTION 2.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 5-1-301, **amend** (6)
17 as follows:

18 **5-1-301. General definitions.** In addition to definitions appearing
19 in subsequent articles, as used in this code, unless the context otherwise
20 requires:

21 (6) "Business day" means any calendar day except Sunday, New
22 Year's day, the third Monday in January observed as the birthday of Dr.
23 Martin Luther King, Jr., Washington-Lincoln day, Memorial day,
24 JUNETEENTH, Independence day, Labor day, Frances Xavier Cabrini day,
25 Veterans' day, Thanksgiving day, and Christmas day.

26 **SECTION 3.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 6-1-102, **amend** (2.5)
27 as follows:

1 **6-1-102. Definitions.** As used in this article 1, unless the context
2 otherwise requires:

3 (2.5) "Business day" means any calendar day except Sunday, New
4 Year's day, the third Monday in January observed as the birthday of Dr.
5 Martin Luther King, Jr., Washington-Lincoln day, Memorial day,
6 JUNETEENTH, Independence day, Labor day, Frances Xavier Cabrini day,
7 Veterans' day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

8 **SECTION 4.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 24-11-101, **amend**
9 (1) as follows:

10 **24-11-101. Legal holidays - effect.** (1) The following days, viz:
11 The first day of January, commonly called New Year's day; the third
12 Monday in January, which shall be observed as the birthday of Dr. Martin
13 Luther King, Jr.; the third Monday in February, commonly called
14 Washington-Lincoln day; the last Monday in May, commonly called
15 Memorial day; THE NINETEENTH DAY OF JUNE, COMMONLY CALLED
16 JUNETEENTH; the fourth day of July, commonly called Independence day;
17 the first Monday in September, commonly called Labor day; the first
18 Monday in October, commonly called Frances Xavier Cabrini day; the
19 eleventh day of November, commonly called Veterans' day; the fourth
20 Thursday in November, commonly called Thanksgiving day; the
21 twenty-fifth day of December, commonly called Christmas day; and any
22 day appointed or recommended by the governor of this state or the
23 president of the United States as a day of fasting or prayer or
24 thanksgiving, are hereby declared to be legal holidays and shall, for all
25 purposes whatsoever, as regards the presenting for payment or acceptance
26 and the protesting and giving notice of the dishonor of bills of exchange,
27 drafts, bank checks, promissory notes, or other negotiable instruments and

1 also for the holding of courts, be treated and considered as is the first day
2 of the week commonly called Sunday.

3 **SECTION 5. Safety clause.** The general assembly hereby finds,
4 determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate
5 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety.