

**NOTE: This bill has been prepared for the signatures of the appropriate legislative officers and the Governor. To determine whether the Governor has signed the bill or taken other action on it, please consult the legislative status sheet, the legislative history, or the Session Laws.**

# An Act

SENATE BILL 22-139

BY SENATOR(S) Buckner and Coleman, Bridges, Danielson, Donovan, Fields, Ginal, Gonzales, Hansen, Hinrichsen, Jaquez Lewis, Kolker, Lee, Moreno, Pettersen, Priola, Rodriguez, Story, Winter, Zenzinger, Fenberg; also REPRESENTATIVE(S) Herod, Amabile, Bacon, Benavidez, Bernett, Bird, Boesenecker, Caraveo, Carver, Cutter, Daugherty, Esgar, Exum, Froelich, Gonzales-Gutierrez, Gray, Hooton, Jodeh, Kennedy, Kipp, Lindsay, Lontine, McCluskie, McCormick, Michaelson Jenet, Mullica, Ricks, Roberts, Sirota, Snyder, Soper, Sullivan, Titone, Valdez A., Weissman, Young.

CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF JUNETEENTH AS A STATE HOLIDAY.

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

**SECTION 1. Legislative declaration.** (1) The general assembly hereby finds and declares that:

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

*Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material added to existing law; dashes through words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law and such material is not part of the act.*

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

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

(d) On "Freedom's Eve", or the eve of January 1, 1863, the first Watch Night services took place. On that night, enslaved and free African Americans gathered in churches and private homes all across the country awaiting news that the Emancipation Proclamation had taken effect. At the stroke of midnight, prayers were answered as all enslaved people in Confederate states were declared legally free. Union soldiers, many of whom were Black, marched onto plantations and across cities in the south reading small copies of the Emancipation Proclamation and spreading the news of freedom in Confederate states.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**24-11-101. Legal holidays - effect.** (1) The following days, viz: The first day of January, commonly called New Year's day; the third Monday in January, which shall be observed as the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; the third Monday in February, commonly called Washington-Lincoln day; the last Monday in May, commonly called Memorial day; THE NINETEENTH DAY OF JUNE, COMMONLY CALLED JUNETEENTH; the fourth day of July, commonly called Independence day; the first Monday in September, commonly called Labor day; the first Monday in October, commonly called Frances Xavier Cabrini day; the eleventh day of November, commonly called Veterans' day; the fourth Thursday in November, commonly called Thanksgiving day; the twenty-fifth day of December, commonly called Christmas day; and any day

appointed or recommended by the governor of this state or the president of the United States as a day of fasting or prayer or thanksgiving, are hereby declared to be legal holidays and shall, for all purposes whatsoever, as regards the presenting for payment or acceptance and the protesting and giving notice of the dishonor of bills of exchange, drafts, bank checks, promissory notes, or other negotiable instruments and also for the holding of courts, be treated and considered as is the first day of the week commonly called Sunday.

**SECTION 5. Safety clause.** The general assembly hereby finds,

determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety.

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Steve Fenberg  
PRESIDENT OF  
THE SENATE

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Alec Garnett  
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE  
OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Cindi L. Markwell  
SECRETARY OF  
THE SENATE

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Robin Jones  
CHIEF CLERK OF THE HOUSE  
OF REPRESENTATIVES

APPROVED \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date and Time)

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Jared S. Polis  
GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF COLORADO