

Proclamation

Board of Commissioners for Washington County

A PROCLAMATION IN HONOR OF JUNETEENTH 2022

June 7, 2022

WHEREAS, Juneteenth is often referred to as our country's second Independence Day and has long been celebrated among the African American community, its historical significance has largely been omitted from educational curricula, making it relatively unknown to the wider population, and

WHEREAS, despite the Emancipation Proclamation by President Abraham Lincoln on January 1st, 1863, and passage of the 13th Amendment by the U.S. Congress, more than 250,000 enslaved Africans and their descendants remained in bondage in the State of Texas until the arrival of Union troops at Galveston on the 19th day of June 1865; and

WHEREAS, when the news of their emancipation spread, following the reading of "General Order Number Three" by Major General Gordon Granger, the formerly enslaved people of Texas reacted with joyous celebrations, launching what would become an annual event known as Juneteenth; and

WHEREAS, early celebrations of Juneteenth consisted of family and community gatherings filled not only with special food and festivities but also prayer, reflection and respect for ancestors who suffered under slavery; and

WHEREAS, the observance of Juneteenth evolved over time, leading up to January 1, 1980, when Texas became the first state in the nation to formally establish Juneteenth as an official holiday, thanks to the tireless efforts of the late, former State Representative Al Edwards, who served for more than 30 years in the Texas State Legislature; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth celebrations continue to grow within communities and organizations throughout the country, helping to promote knowledge and appreciation of African American history, resilience, family, community and culture; and

WHEREAS, we honor the legacy of those who first received the news on that unforgettable day in Galveston and understand that the joy reflected in the celebration of Juneteenth provides a salve and a buffer against the generational trauma of slavery and widespread systemic racism that limits Black prosperity and health to this day; and

WHEREAS, we pledge to continue our efforts to lift up the importance and history of Juneteenth and work tirelessly to root out institutional racism wherever it exists and advance equity and inclusion for all members of our community; and

WHEREAS, the Juneteenth National Independence Act, 415-14 created for the people of the United States to acknowledge and celebrate the end of the Civil War and the emancipation of Black Americans, and commit together to eradicating systemic racism that still undermines our founding ideals and collective prosperity; and

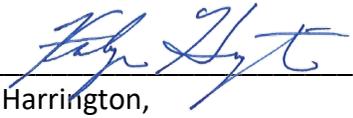
WHEREAS, the Washington County Board of County Commissioners voted on November 30, 2021 to recognize Juneteenth as paid county holiday; and

WHEREAS, the Juneteenth flag, created by the National Juneteenth Celebration Foundation, represents "a new freedom, a new people, a new star" with the star and colors of red, blue and white serving to symbolize the birthplace of the holiday Galveston, Texas and the American Flag, and the arc that extends across the width of the flag represents a new horizon: the opportunities and promises that lay ahead for decedents of American slavery; and

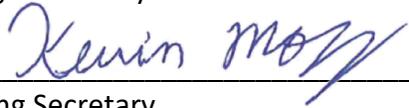
WHEREAS, in keeping with Washington County's practice of displaying flags that underscore our values as a county, this year we will fly the Juneteenth flag from June 13-21 in recognition of the holiday.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Washington County Board of Commissioners does hereby proclaim June 19, 2022, as Juneteenth and calls upon the people of Washington County to observe this month with appropriate programs, activities, and reflections and to continue our efforts to create a world that is more just, equitable and prosperous for all.





Kathryn Harrington,
Washington County Board Chair



Recording Secretary

_____ **22-167** _____
Minute Order