



Legislation Text

File #: 78154, Version: 3

Fiscal Note

No fiscal impact.

Title

SECOND SUBSTITUTE: Encouraging employers to honor Juneteenth as a paid holiday

Body

WHEREAS, in 2021, when Juneteenth was signed into law by President Joseph Biden it became one of only five state-specific federal holidays, joining New Year's Day, Independence Day, Veteran's Day and Christmas; and,

WHEREAS, Juneteenth honors the quest for freedom in America; and,

WHEREAS, ~~June 19th~~ Juneteenth is Freedom Day; and,

WHEREAS, ~~freedom, ultimately as a collective aspiration, is a virtue to keep and protect as the hallmark of our democracy; and,~~

WHEREAS, June 19th falls within Honor America Days; and,

WHEREAS, freedom is a hallmark of our democracy, and a rightness to keep and protect; and,

WHEREAS, Juneteenth commemorates the end of slavery in America ~~as it stood~~ and further celebrates the founding of, fighting for and forging of freedom for all, a virtue of fact, embedded into the Declaration of Independence; and,

WHEREAS, slavery was an immoral and ~~inequitably unbalanced~~ inequitable economic and labor engine, which further confined the physical, emotional, mental, spiritual and financial ~~prosperity and well-being~~ of so many; and,

WHEREAS, it became apparent that ~~those enslaved~~, slavery, as an and its institution in America, directly impeached freedom and the concept found thereof in the ~~f~~Founding ~~d~~Documents; and,

WHEREAS, this constitutional contradiction further jeopardized freedom in the Union and its ability to remain a united state; and,

WHEREAS, on June 19th, 1862, Congress, under President Lincoln, outlawed slavery in US territories with under an “act to secure freedom for all persons with in the Territories of the United States;” and,

WHEREAS, this act would eventually free people through the Emancipation Proclamations ~~coupled with ratified by several enforcements and ratified~~ amendments (13th, 14th and 15th) ~~and enforcements~~; and,

WHEREAS, instead of being enslaved, sold at will, rented out, used as a prize, for debt or for wage, over time many ~~(in essence and over time)~~ fought for and gained the right to seek protection and protect oneself and to seek protection, to get an education and be educated, to dress oneself, ~~to name oneself and be oneself~~, the right to know, learn and record one's your history and be in and with family; and,

WHEREAS, many fought for the freedom of religion, ~~freedom to sue and testify in legal proceedings, from freedom from~~ internment, freedom from Jim Crow, and freedom from disparity; equally many fought for the freedom to travel, to own property, to be in business, and the freedom to travel and employment, of at-will employment; and,

WHEREAS, so many people sought fought for (and some gained) the freedom to peacefully assemble, to sue, to testify and to redress grievances in court; and,

WHEREAS, many sought the right to seek and receive proper personal care and healthcare, and others fought for the right to participate in public, civic and political life; to negotiate freely, the ~~economic~~ right to work, seek equal pay; serve in the military and even the right to earn citizenship in a country build by their labor; and,

WHEREAS, this recognition of freedom, embedded into the Declaration of Independence and manifested in Juneteenth, has lent its weight to a multitude of several other civil, human, social justice movements; to acts and laws and that effectively, has led to many a multitude of other collective quests for freedom and equality; to progress ranging from the right to vote to through many civil rights acts through in education into marriage equality and for the right to immigrate, and migrate, and to participate, as a complete and lawful citizen, many of the same freedoms people are still fighting for today; and,

WHEREAS, the Common Council recognizes that the events leading up to and surrounding Juneteenth are connected to the struggle for freedom and other progress which forwards ~~forwarding~~ humanity; and,

WHEREAS, with in regard to workers, this freedom celebrated on Juneteenth allowed people who were in unpaid service as carpenters, drivers, mechanics, skilled laborers, educators, and healthcare practitioners and many other skilled labor jobs to become bona fide workers and make choices ~~about~~ for themselves, about where they labored, what type of work they performed, and under what contracts they were employed

negotiated; and,

WHEREAS, the Juneteenth holiday is an opportunity to recognize the long history of gross oppression, ~~pushed against active resistance and resilience~~; and,

~~WHEREAS, the freedom of undiscovered truth that history holds is a lesson for the future and when learned, acknowledged and understood creates space for unspoken growth, healing and new possibilities; and,~~

WHEREAS, ~~in 2023, to date,~~ the historical legacy of slavery continues to hinder affect the progress and negatively impact the lives all people in this United States; ~~and,~~

WHEREAS, as Opal Lee, the Grandmother of Juneteenth, who was instrumental in bringing Juneteenth forward, has declared, that “nobody is free until we are all free;” and,

WHEREAS, ~~as Lee,~~ in response to why Juneteenth is important for everyone, Lee said highlighted that “We celebrate our independence on the 4th of July and freedom on the 19th of June” a statement which underscores the fact that we as country gained and celebrated our independence on the 4th of July and our never-ending quest and right for freedom in America is now celebrated on the 19th of June ~~19th~~; and,

WHEREAS, workers at UW Health and other large employers around the country have proposed that Juneteenth be added to the list of paid holidays; and,

WHEREAS, the path to Juneteenth becoming a national holiday was directly influenced by the work and mentorship between Dr. Opal Lee, a Nobel Peace Prize nominated Human Rights Icon, and the late Dr. Ronald Myers, who founded the National Juneteenth Observance Foundation (NJOF); and,

WHEREAS, for Dr. Myers, who as a medical doctor and a graduate of the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine & Public Health, advocacy in healthcare was foundational to his advocacy for the recognition of freedom in celebrating Juneteenth; and,

WHEREAS, both Dr. Myers and Dr. Lee worked collectively, in community with others, to pass bills in over 40 states before the formal recognition, promise, right and celebration of freedom in Juneteenth was ushered in on a national level when it was signed into law by President Joseph Biden as the eleventh United States federal holiday and;

WHEREAS, a growing list of large US companies, such as Target, Nike, Lyft, Apple, Instacart, and Starbucks, have recognized Juneteenth as paid time off; and,

WHEREAS, as an employer, the City of Madison ~~as an employer~~ recognizes Juneteenth as a paid holiday ~~for its employees~~;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Madison and its Common Council not only recognizes the importance of Juneteenth in this city and further commits to encouraging local employers to take the lead in creating structural change so that all of our communities may realize the freedom and equality first promised by the Emancipation Proclamation by recognizing Juneteenth as a paid holiday, but also urge all major employers including our community-driven healthcare systems and institutions such as UW Health, Meriter, SSM Health, St. Mary's, Oakwood Village, Oak Park and the Bay, to take the lead in honoring Juneteenth as a paid holiday for all of their workers, if this option does not already exist.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we further emphasize our belief that this action not only recognizes Juneteenth's historical connection and importance to Wisconsin but also underscores the critical roles that our major systems, institutions and employers play in supporting and furthering our community's diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts and underscores the freedom that wellness provides to all.