

COMMUNICATION FROM CHAIR, PERSONNEL AND ANIMAL WELFARE COMMITTEE relative to establishing Juneteenth as a legal holiday in the City of Los Angeles.

Recommendation for Council action pursuant to Motion (Harris-Dawson - Price - Wesson - O'Farrell):

INSTRUCT the Chief Legislative Analyst (CLA), with assistance of the City Administrative Officer (CAO) and the Civil and Human Rights Commission, to report on the historical importance and cultural impact of Juneteenth, and options for establishing Juneteenth as a legal holiday in the City of Los Angeles.

Fiscal Impact Statement: Neither the CAO nor the CLA has completed a financial analysis of this report.

Community Impact Statement: None submitted.

Summary:

On August 19, 2020, the Chair of the Personnel and Animal Welfare Committee considered a Motion (Harris-Dawson - Price - Wesson - O'Farrell) relative to establishing Juneteenth as a legal holiday in the City of Los Angeles. According to the Motion, during the American Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, declaring "that all persons held as slaves within the rebellious states are, and henceforward shall be free." In the majority of the country, Blacks who were enslaved were alerted of their new found freedom shortly after it was issued. However, this was not the case in Galveston, Texas where the message was not heard until June 19th, 1865, two years after the original proclamation. On June 19th, the news was met by both celebration and shock as many Blacks who were enslaved never imagined the day would come to fruition. As the years passed, June 19" became known as "Juneteenth" and became a day of celebration within the Black community to acknowledge how far they have come and how far there is to go in the quest for equality.

While Juneteenth is widely known within the Black community in the American South, nationally it is not recognized. In light of recent protests that have called for racial equity within the country in response to the unarmed killings of Black Americans at the hands of police like those of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and countless other Black Americans, there has been a new interest to commemorate, celebrate and acknowledge the historical significance of Juneteenth. Here within the City of Los Angeles nearly half a million Black Angelenos call this City home. Their contributions to their communities are endless and vital to this City as they serve in various capacities as they are business owners, inventors, healthcare professionals, and educators. Because of this, it is with great importance that the City honors the historic contributions of Black Angelenos and Americans from the past, present, and future by establishing Juneteenth as a legal City holiday. After consideration and having provided an opportunity for public comment, the Committee Chair moved to recommend approval of the Motion. This matter is now submitted to Council for its consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

COUNCILMEMBER PAUL KORETZ, CHAIR
PERSONNEL AND ANIMAL WELFARE COMMITTEE

MEMBER VOTE

KORETZ: YES

LEE: ABSENT

PRICE: ABSENT

ARL

8/19/20

-NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL COUNCIL ACTS-