HOUSE BILL NO. 317

1   AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 3-3-7, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
2 DESIGNATE JUNE 19 AS "JUNETEENTH FREEDOM DAY"; TO SPECIFICALLY
3 PROVIDE THAT JUNETEENTH FREEDOM DAY SHALL NOT BE A LEGAL HOLIDAY,
4 BUT SHALL BE A DAY OF COMMEMORATION AT NO EXPENSE TO THE STATE; TO
5 CLARIFY WHEN A LEGAL HOLIDAY WILL BE CELEBRATED WHEN THE HOLIDAY
6 FALLS ON A SATURDAY OR SUNDAY; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

7   WHEREAS, the date of June 19 is known as "Juneteenth," and it

8 is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of

9 slavery in the United States; and

10   WHEREAS, the commemoration of June 19 as Juneteenth

11 specifically refers to the fact that, even though President

12 Lincoln announced the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, the

13 joyous news of freedom from slavery did not reach certain

14 Americans in Galveston, Texas, until June 19, 1865; and

15   WHEREAS, Juneteenth commemorates freedom from slavery in

16 America, emphasizes education and achievement, and is a day for

17 reflection and rejoicing in the African-American experience; and

18   WHEREAS, the celebration of Juneteenth is inclusive of all

19 races, ethnicities, religions and nationalities, in that citizens

20 across our country join hands in acknowledging a period in our

21 history that has influenced our society — a great society that

22 advances the ideals of liberty and justice for all; NOW,

23 THEREFORE,

24   BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

25   **SECTION 1.** Section 3-3-7, Mississippi Code of 1972, is

26 amended as follows:

27   3-3-7. (1) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (2)

28 of this section, the following are declared to be legal holidays,

29 viz: the first day of January (New Year's Day); the third Monday

30 of January (Robert E. Lee's birthday and Dr. Martin Luther King,

31 Jr.'s birthday); the third Monday of February (Washington's

32 birthday); the last Monday of April (Confederate Memorial Day);

33 the last Monday of May (National Memorial Day and Jefferson Davis'

34 birthday); the fourth day of July (Independence Day); the first

35 Monday of September (Labor Day); the eleventh day of November

36 (Armistice or Veterans' Day); the day fixed by proclamation by the

37 Governor of Mississippi as a day of Thanksgiving, which shall be

38 fixed to correspond to the date proclaimed by the President of the

39 United States (Thanksgiving Day); and the twenty-fifth day of

40 December (Christmas Day). *** * *** <u>If</u> any holiday *** * *** fall<u>s</u> on <u>a</u>

41 <u>Saturday or</u> Sunday, then the next following *** * *** <u>Monday, or</u>

42 <u>another day fixed by proclamation of the Governor as the day to</u>

43 <u>celebrate the holiday,</u> shall be a legal holiday.

44   (2) In lieu of any one (1) legal holiday provided for in

45 subsection (1) of this section, with the exception of the third

46 Monday in January (Robert E. Lee's and Martin Luther King, Jr.'s
47 birthday) and the eleventh day of November (Armistice or Veterans'
48 Day), the governing authorities of any municipality or county may
49 declare, by order spread upon its minutes, Mardi Gras Day or any
50 one (1) other day during the year, to be a legal holiday.

51 (3) The following are not legal holidays for purposes of
52 this section, and the commemoration, recognition or observation of
53 these days does not authorize any state or local governmental
54 entity or political subdivision to consider, recognize or declare
55 such days as legal holidays:

56 (** * *a) August 16 is declared to be Elvis Aaron
57 Presley Day in recognition and appreciation of Elvis Aaron
58 Presley's many contributions, international recognition and the
59 rich legacy left to us by Elvis Aaron Presley. This day shall be
60 a day of recognition and observation and shall not be recognized
61 as a legal holiday.

62 (** * *b) May 8 is declared to be Hernando de Soto Day
63 in recognition, observation and commemoration of Hernando de Soto,
64 who led the first and most imposing expedition ever made by
65 Europeans into the wilds of North America and the State of
66 Mississippi, and in further recognition of the Spanish explorer's
67 187-day journey from the Tombigbee River basin on our state's
68 eastern boundary, westward to the place of discovery of the
69 Mississippi River on May 8, 1541. This day shall be a day of
70 commemoration, recognition and observation of Hernando de Soto and

71 European exploration and shall not be recognized as a legal

72 holiday.

73   (c) June 19 is declared to be Juneteenth Freedom Day in

74 recognition and commemoration of June 19, 1865, as the date former

75 slaves of African descent received communication that slavery had

76 ended in America, and as a day when the ideals of liberty and

77 justice for all citizens is celebrated. This day shall be a day

78 of commemoration, recognition and observation and shall not be

79 recognized as a legal holiday.

80   (*** * ***4) Armistice Day (Veterans' Day) shall be observed by

81 appropriate exercises in all the public schools in the State of

82 Mississippi. The superintendent of schools of each public school

83 district is authorized to provide for the appearance of uniformed

84 military personnel, uniformed veterans or the families of fallen

85 military personnel/veterans at such public school exercises in

86 honor of Armistice (Veterans') Day. The superintendent of schools

87 is also authorized to permit the school band and its director(s)

88 at any public school in the district to perform at Armistice

89 (Veterans') Day exercises in the school district upon the request

90 of public officials or veterans associations without loss of any

91 program credit by participating students and without loss of leave

92 by participating school personnel.

93   **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from

94 and after July 1, 2018.

H. B. No. 317 ||||||||||||||||||||||||| **~ OFFICIAL ~**
18/HR26/R401   ST: Juneteenth Freedom Day; designate as day of
PAGE 4 (ENK\KW)   commemoration, not paid legal holiday.