

By: Representatives Clark, Karriem

To: Rules

HOUSE BILL NO. 126

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 TO COMMEMORATE FREEDOM FROM SLAVERY AT NO
5 EXPENSE TO THE STATE; TO PROVIDE WHEN A LEGAL HOLIDAY WILL BE
6 CELEBRATED IF THE HOLIDAY FALLS ON A SATURDAY OR SUNDAY; AND FOR
7 RELATED PURPOSES.

8 WHEREAS, the date of June 19 is known as "Juneteenth," and it
9 is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of
10 slavery in the United States; and

11 WHEREAS, the commemoration of June 19 as Juneteenth
12 specifically refers to the fact that, even though President
13 Lincoln announced the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, the
14 joyous news of freedom from slavery did not reach certain
15 Americans in Galveston, Texas, until June 19, 1865; and

16 WHEREAS, Juneteenth commemorates freedom from slavery in
17 America, emphasizes education and achievement and is a day for
18 reflection and rejoicing in the African-American experience; and

19 WHEREAS, the celebration of Juneteenth is inclusive of all
20 races, ethnicities, religions and nationalities, and citizens



21 across our country may join hands in acknowledging a period in our
22 history that has influenced our society, a great society that
23 advances the ideals of liberty and justice for all; NOW,
24 THEREFORE,

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

26 **SECTION 1.** Section 3-3-7, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
27 amended as follows:

28 3-3-7. (1) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (2)
29 of this section, the following are declared to be legal holidays

30 * * *:

31 (a) The first day of January, designated as New Year's
32 Day;

33 (b) The third Monday of January, designated as both
34 Robert E. Lee's birthday and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s
35 birthday;

36 (c) The third Monday of February, designated as George
37 Washington's birthday;

38 (d) The last Monday of April, designated as Confederate
39 Memorial Day;

40 (e) The last Monday of May, designated as National
41 Memorial Day and Jefferson Davis' birthday;

42 (f) The fourth day of July, designated as Independence
43 Day;

44 (g) The first Monday of September, designated as Labor
45 Day;



46 (h) The eleventh day of November, designated as
47 Armistice or Veterans' Day;

48 (i) The day fixed by proclamation by the Governor of
49 Mississippi as a day of Thanksgiving, which shall be fixed to
50 correspond to the date proclaimed by the President of the United
51 States, designated as Thanksgiving Day; and

52 (j) The twenty-fifth day of December, designated as
53 Christmas Day.

54 * * * If any legal holiday * * * falls on a Saturday or
55 Sunday, then the next following * * * Monday, or another day
56 declared by proclamation of the Governor as the day to celebrate
57 the holiday, shall be a legal holiday.

58 (2) In lieu of any one (1) legal holiday provided for in
59 subsection (1) of this section, with the exception of the third
60 Monday in January, designated as both Robert E. Lee's and Martin
61 Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, and the eleventh day of November,
62 designated as Armistice or Veterans' Day, the governing
63 authorities of any municipality or county may declare, by order
64 spread upon its minutes, Mardi Gras Day or any one (1) other day
65 during the year, to be a legal holiday.

66 (3) August 16 is declared to be Elvis Aaron Presley Day in
67 recognition and appreciation of Elvis Aaron Presley's many
68 contributions, international recognition and the rich legacy left
69 to us by Elvis Aaron Presley. This day shall be a day of



70 recognition and observation and shall not be recognized as a legal
71 holiday.

72 (4) May 8 is declared to be Hernando de Soto Day in
73 recognition, observation and commemoration of Hernando de Soto,
74 who led the first and most imposing expedition ever made by
75 Europeans into the wilds of North America and the State of
76 Mississippi, and in further recognition of the Spanish explorer's
77 187-day journey from the Tombigbee River basin on our state's
78 eastern boundary, westward to the place of discovery of the
79 Mississippi River on May 8, 1541. This day shall be a day of
80 commemoration, recognition and observation of Hernando de Soto and
81 European exploration and shall not be recognized as a legal
82 holiday.

83 (5) June 19 is declared to be Juneteenth Freedom Day in
84 recognition and commemoration of June 19, 1865, as the date former
85 slaves of African descent received communication that slavery had
86 ended in America, and as a day when the ideals of liberty and
87 justice for all citizens is celebrated. This day shall be a day
88 of commemoration, recognition and observation and shall not be
89 recognized as a legal holiday.

90 (* * *6) Armistice Day or Veterans' Day shall be observed
91 by appropriate exercises in all the public schools in the State of
92 Mississippi. The superintendent of schools of each public school
93 district is authorized to provide for the appearance of uniformed
94 military personnel, uniformed veterans or the families of fallen



95 military personnel/veterans at such public school exercises in
96 honor of Armistice or Veterans' Day. The superintendent of
97 schools is also authorized to permit the school band and its
98 director(s) at any public school in the district to perform at
99 Armistice or Veterans' Day exercises in the school district upon
100 the request of public officials or veterans associations without
101 loss of any program credit by participating students and without
102 loss of leave by participating school personnel.

103 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
104 and after July 1, 2023.

