

By: Representatives Banks, Harness,  
Faulkner, Brown (70th), Clark, Evans (91st),  
Gibbs, Hines, Hulum, Mickens, Porter,  
Straughter, Thompson

To: Rules

HOUSE BILL NO. 494

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 3-3-7, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO  
2 DESIGNATE JUNE NINETEEN, JUNETEENTH, AS A LEGAL HOLIDAY IN THE  
3 STATE OF MISSISSIPPI; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

4 WHEREAS, the Legislature finds that June 19, 1865, known as  
5 "Juneteenth," commemorates the true end to slavery in the United  
6 States when Major General Gordon Granger traveled to Galveston,  
7 Texas, and declared the joyous news of freedom from slavery, and  
8 250,000 enslaved individuals in Texas finally learned that they  
9 were free, nearly two years after the Emancipation Proclamation  
10 was signed by President Abraham Lincoln; and

11 WHEREAS, Juneteenth is considered to be the longest-standing  
12 African-American holiday marking the end of slavery in the United  
13 States, and it has been celebrated across the nation for over 150  
14 years in commemoration of the last enslaved persons' freedom,  
15 while emphasizing education and achievement, as well as  
16 inclusiveness of all races and ethnic groups; and

17 WHEREAS, on June 15, 2021, the U.S. Senate unanimously passed  
18 the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act to establish



19 Juneteenth as a federal holiday, and this unanimous vote included  
20 "aye" votes from Senator Roger Wicker and Senator Cindy Hyde  
21 Smith; and on June 16, 2021, the U.S. House of Representatives  
22 passed the act with a vote of 415-14, with the "aye" votes  
23 including those from Representative Bennie Thompson,  
24 Representative Steven Palazzo, Representative Michael Guest and  
25 Representative Trent Kelly; and

26 WHEREAS, forty-seven states and the District of Columbia have  
27 declared Juneteenth as a public holiday, honoring freedom,  
28 recognizing life and uplifting the complex history and beautiful  
29 culture of the African-American community; and

30 WHEREAS, legal holidays in the State of Mississippi are  
31 purposefully few in number and recognize the most important  
32 milestones in our nation's history, and Juneteenth is certainly  
33 one of our nation's most important milestones, as it marks the  
34 true end of slavery in the United States, and should be declared a  
35 legal holiday in the State of Mississippi; NOW, THEREFORE,

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

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

39 3-3-7. (1) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (2)  
40 of this section, the following are declared to be legal holidays,  
41 viz: the first day of January (New Year's Day); the third Monday  
42 of January (Robert E. Lee's birthday and Dr. Martin Luther King,  
43 Jr.'s birthday); the third Monday of February (Washington's



44 birthday); the last Monday of April (Confederate Memorial Day);  
45 the last Monday of May (National Memorial Day and Jefferson Davis'  
46 birthday); the nineteenth day of June (Juneteenth); the fourth day  
47 of July (Independence Day); the first Monday of September (Labor  
48 Day); the eleventh day of November (Armistice or Veterans' Day);  
49 the day fixed by proclamation by the Governor of Mississippi as a  
50 day of Thanksgiving, which shall be fixed to correspond to the  
51 date proclaimed by the President of the United States  
52 (Thanksgiving Day); and the twenty-fifth day of December  
53 (Christmas Day). \* \* \* If any holiday \* \* \* falls on a Saturday  
54 or Sunday, then the next following \* \* \* Monday, or another day  
55 fixed by proclamation of the Governor as the day to celebrate the  
56 holiday, shall be a legal holiday.

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

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



68 recognition and observation and shall not be recognized as a legal  
69 holiday.

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

81 (5) Armistice Day (Veterans' Day) shall be observed by  
82 appropriate exercises in all the public schools in the State of  
83 Mississippi. The superintendent of schools of each public school  
84 district is authorized to provide for the appearance of uniformed  
85 military personnel, uniformed veterans or the families of fallen  
86 military personnel/veterans at such public school exercises in  
87 honor of Armistice (Veterans' Day). The superintendent of schools  
88 is also authorized to permit the school band and its director(s)  
89 at any public school in the district to perform at Armistice  
90 (Veterans' Day) exercises in the school district upon the request  
91 of public officials or veterans associations without loss of any



92 program credit by participating students and without loss of leave  
93 by participating school personnel.

94         **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
95 and after its passage.

