By: Representative Rosebud   To: Rules

HOUSE BILL NO. 1008

1   AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 3-3-7, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
2   DESIGNATE JUNE 19TH, JUNETEENTH, AS A LEGAL HOLIDAY IN THE STATE
3   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.