

By: Representative Scott

To: Rules

HOUSE BILL NO. 352

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 3-3-7, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
2 DESIGNATE JUNE 19TH, JUNETEENTH NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE DAY, AS A
3 LEGAL HOLIDAY IN THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI; TO CLARIFY WHEN A LEGAL
4 HOLIDAY WILL BE CELEBRATED WHEN THE HOLIDAY FALLS ON A SATURDAY OR
5 SUNDAY; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

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



19 WHEREAS, on June 15, 2021, the U.S. Senate unanimously passed
20 the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act to establish
21 Juneteenth as a federal holiday, and this unanimous vote included
22 "aye" votes from Senator Roger Wicker and Senator Cindy Hyde
23 Smith; and on June 16, 2021, the U.S. House of Representatives
24 passed the act with a vote of 415-14, with the "aye" votes
25 including those from Representative Bennie Thompson,
26 Representative Steven Palazzo, Representative Michael Guest and
27 Representative Trent Kelly; and

28 WHEREAS, on June 17, 2021, at 10:00 a.m. CST, Representative
29 Omeria Scott requested legislation to be drafted that designates
30 June 19th, Juneteenth National Independence Day, as an official,
31 legal state holiday in the State of Mississippi, five hours and
32 three minutes before President Joe Biden, the 46th President of
33 the United States, signed the Juneteenth National Independence Day
34 Act, making Juneteenth a federal holiday at 4:03 p.m. EST; and

35 WHEREAS, forty-seven states and the District of Columbia have
36 declared Juneteenth as a public holiday, honoring freedom,
37 recognizing life and uplifting the complex history and beautiful
38 culture of the African-American community; and

39 WHEREAS, legal holidays in the State of Mississippi are
40 purposefully few in number and recognize the most important
41 milestones in our nation's history, and Juneteenth is certainly
42 one of our nation's most important milestones, as it marks the



true end of slavery in the United States, and should be declared a
legal holiday in the State of Mississippi; NOW, THEREFORE,

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

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

3-3-7. (1) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (2)
of this section, the following are declared to be legal holidays,
viz: the first day of January (New Year's Day); the third Monday
of January (Robert E. Lee's birthday and Dr. Martin Luther King,
Jr.'s birthday); the third Monday of February (Washington's
birthday); the last Monday of April (Confederate Memorial Day);
the last Monday of May (National Memorial Day and Jefferson Davis'
birthday); the nineteenth day of June (Juneteenth National
Independence Day) the fourth day of July (Independence Day); the
first Monday of September (Labor Day); the eleventh day of
November (Armistice or Veterans' Day); the day fixed by
proclamation by the Governor of Mississippi as a day of
Thanksgiving, which shall be fixed to correspond to the date
proclaimed by the President of the United States (Thanksgiving
Day); and the twenty-fifth day of December (Christmas Day). * * *
If any holiday * * * falls on a Saturday or Sunday, then the next
following * * * Monday, or another day fixed by proclamation of
the Governor as the day to celebrate the holiday, shall be a legal
holiday.



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

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

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



(5) Armistice Day (Veterans' Day) shall be observed by appropriate exercises in all the public schools in the State of Mississippi. The superintendent of schools of each public school district is authorized to provide for the appearance of uniformed military personnel, uniformed veterans or the families of fallen military personnel/veterans at such public school exercises in honor of Armistice (Veterans') Day. The superintendent of schools is also authorized to permit the school band and its director(s) at any public school in the district to perform at Armistice (Veterans') Day exercises in the school district upon the request of public officials or veterans associations without loss of any program credit by participating students and without loss of leave by participating school personnel.

(6) The month of March is declared to be "Mississippi Musicians Month" to recognize and celebrate the state's rich musical heritage and to encourage the world to join Mississippi in honoring our musicians and their contributions.

(7) In recognition of the service, courage and sacrifice of the valiant service members of the Tuskegee Airmen who served during World War II, the fourth Thursday of March is designated as Tuskegee Airmen Day in Mississippi. This should be a day of recognition and observation and shall not be recognized as a legal holiday.

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

