

By: Representative Banks

To: Rules

HOUSE BILL NO. 906

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
41 holidays * * *: the first day of January (New Year's Day); the
42 third Monday of January (Robert E. Lee's birthday and Dr. Martin
43 Luther King, Jr.'s birthday); the third Monday of February



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

56 (2) In lieu of any one (1) legal holiday provided for in
57 subsection (1) of this section, with the exception of the third
58 Monday in January (Robert E. Lee's birthday and Martin Luther
59 King, Jr.'s birthday) and the eleventh day of November (Armistice
60 or Veterans' Day), the governing authorities of any municipality
61 or county may declare, by order spread upon its minutes, Mardi
62 Gras Day or any one (1) other day during the year, to be a legal
63 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 (6) The month of March is declared to be "Mississippi
95 Musicians Month" to recognize and celebrate the state's rich
96 musical heritage and to encourage the world to join Mississippi in
97 honoring our musicians and their contributions.

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

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

