

By: Representatives Clark, Straughter,
Scott, Fleming, Hines

To: Rules

HOUSE BILL NO. 1220

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 THIS SHALL BE A DAY OF COMMEMORATION AND NOT A LEGAL
4 HOLIDAY; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

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

13 WHEREAS, Juneteenth commemorates freedom from slavery in
14 America, emphasizes education and achievement, and is a time for
15 reflection and rejoicing in the African American experience; and

16 WHEREAS, the celebration of Juneteenth is inclusive of all
17 races, ethnicities, religions and nationalities, in that citizens
18 across our country join hands in acknowledging a period in our
19 history that has influenced our society--a great society that
20 advances the ideals of liberty and justice for all; NOW,
21 THEREFORE,

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

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

25 3-3-7. (1) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (2)
26 of this section, the following are declared to be legal holidays,
27 viz: the first day of January (New Year's Day); the third Monday
28 of January (Robert E. Lee's birthday and Dr. Martin Luther King,

29 Jr.'s birthday); the third Monday of February (Washington's
30 birthday); the last Monday of April (Confederate Memorial Day);
31 the last Monday of May (National Memorial Day and Jefferson Davis'
32 birthday); the fourth day of July (Independence Day); the first
33 Monday of September (Labor Day); the eleventh day of November
34 (Armistice or Veterans' Day); the day fixed by proclamation by the
35 Governor of Mississippi as a day of Thanksgiving, which shall be
36 fixed to correspond to the date proclaimed by the President of the
37 United States (Thanksgiving Day); and the twenty-fifth day of
38 December (Christmas Day). In the event any holiday hereinbefore
39 declared legal shall fall on Sunday, then the next following day
40 shall be a legal holiday.

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

47 (3) The following are not legal holidays for purposes of
48 this section, and the commemoration, recognition or observation of
49 such days does not authorize any state or local governmental
50 entity or political subdivision to consider, recognize or declare
51 such days as legal holidays:

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

58 (b) May 8 is declared to be Hernando De Soto Day in
59 recognition, observation and commemoration of Hernando De Soto,
60 who led the first and most imposing expedition ever made by
61 Europeans into the wilds of North America and the State of

62 Mississippi, and in further recognition of the Spanish explorer's
63 187-day journey from the Tombigbee River basin on our state's
64 eastern boundary, westward to the place of discovery of the
65 Mississippi River on May 8, 1541. This day shall be a day of
66 commemoration, recognition and observation of Hernando De Soto and
67 European exploration and shall not be recognized as a legal
68 holiday.

69 (c) June 19 is declared to be Juneteenth Freedom Day in
70 recognition and commemoration of June 19, 1865, as the date of the
71 communication to former slaves of African descent of the fact that
72 slavery had ended in America, and as a day when the ideals of
73 liberty and justice for all citizens is celebrated. This day
74 shall be a day of commemoration, recognition and observation and
75 shall not be recognized as a legal holiday.

76 (4) Insofar as possible, Armistice Day shall be observed by
77 appropriate exercises in all the public schools in the State of
78 Mississippi at the eleventh hour in the morning of the eleventh
79 day of the eleventh month of the year.

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