



## 2023 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 56

June 21, 2023 – Introduced by Senators L. JOHNSON, BRADLEY, CARPENTER, LARSON, SPREITZER, PFAFF, ROYS, HESSELBEIN and JACQUE, cosponsored by Representatives DRAKE, EMERSON, NEUBAUER, RATCLIFF, OHNSTAD, SUBECK, VINING, BARE, ORTIZ-VELEZ, SHELTON, GOYKE, DOYLE, C. ANDERSON, SHANKLAND, JOERS, CONSIDINE, BRANDTJEN, ANDRACA, DITTRICH, PALMERI, RIEMER, ALLEN, HONG, SINICKI, CABRERA, J. ANDERSON, CONLEY, SCHRAA, CLANCY, MCGUIRE, BALDEH, HAYWOOD, MYERS, STUBBS, MOORE OMOKUNDE and MADISON. Referred to Committee on Senate Organization.

1     **Relating to:** recognizing June 19, 2023, as Juneteenth Day in Wisconsin.

2             Whereas, Juneteenth Day is a national holiday that celebrates the end of  
3 slavery in the United States, and Juneteenth Day specifically commemorates June  
4 19, 1865, the day that Union General Gordon Granger spoke in Galveston, Texas,  
5 proclaiming free the last remaining slaves in the United States; and

6             Whereas, Union General Gordon Granger delivered this news to recognize the  
7 freedom of these men, and this proclamation was given nearly two and one-half  
8 years after the Emancipation Proclamation was declared; and

9             Whereas, slavery in the United States lasted over 250 years and enslaved  
10 millions of African Americans in horrific conditions throughout all regions in the  
11 United States, including in Wisconsin, where hundreds of slaves were held illegally;  
12 and

13             Whereas, Juneteenth Day is officially observed in 47 states across the country,  
14 and Juneteenth Day has come to signify a celebration of African American freedom,  
15 achievement, and history; and

1           Whereas, Wisconsin has one of the nation’s oldest and longest running  
2 Juneteenth celebrations due to Milwaukee’s first celebration in 1971, which began  
3 when then-Northcott staff member Margaret Rogers told others how much she had  
4 enjoyed a Juneteenth Day celebration in Georgia. Based on Rogers’s experience,  
5 Northcott decided to begin a similar tradition in Milwaukee—spearheaded in its  
6 early days by festival executive director Marvin Hannah and coordinator Jan  
7 Kemp-Cole—and the festival soon became the unofficial opening of summer; and

8           Whereas, the following have had a positive, instrumental impact on  
9 Juneteenth:

10           • **Executive directors and Juneteenth presidents:** Joe Winston,  
11 MacArthur Weddle, and Tony A. Kearney Sr.

12           • **Juneteenth directors and outstanding volunteers:** Adriane Griffin,  
13 Adeline Pressie, Torre “ToJoe” Johnson, Tyrone Daniels, Robert Johnson, Ricky  
14 Townsell, LaMar Franklin, Ben Johnson, Yvonne Kemp, James Carroll, Michelle  
15 Crockett, Rep. Marcia P. Coggs, Rep. Annette Polly Williams, Rep. Lloyd Barbee,  
16 Ruben and Mildred Harpole, Jeanetta Simpson Robinson, Mother Claretta Simpson,  
17 and Word Warrior: Micheal McGee & KU

18           • **Long-term organizational historical support:** Girl Scouts; WNOV 860;  
19 Milwaukee Black newspapers Milwaukee Courier, Milwaukee Community Journal,  
20 and Milwaukee Times; Jammin 98.3 WFMR; WMCS 1290; and WAWA 1560; and

21           Whereas, Juneteenth Day brings the African American community and  
22 persons of all races together in the fight for equality, and it is important as legislators  
23 to promote solidarity in this effort; and

1           Whereas, Juneteenth Day is typically celebrated in ways such as public  
2 readings of the Emancipation Proclamation, educational activities, parades,  
3 community festivals, and family gatherings; and

4           Whereas, Juneteenth Day provides a time for a reflection on the history of the  
5 institution of slavery in the United States and Wisconsin, provides an opportunity  
6 to educate Americans about the history of slavery and emancipation, and provides  
7 an occasion to celebrate the continuing advancement of African Americans and  
8 freedom in the United States; now, therefore, be it

9           ***Resolved by the senate, the assembly concurring, That*** the legislature  
10 hereby proclaims June 19, 2023, as Juneteenth Day in Wisconsin.

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(END)