

## 2015-J2116

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 40th consecutive Juneteenth Festival Parade upon the occasion of the Juneteenth 40th Anniversary Gala on May 15, 2015

WHEREAS, Juneteenth is the oldest-known celebration of the ending of slavery; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 40th consecutive Juneteenth Festival Parade upon the occasion of the Juneteenth 40th Anniversary Gala on May 15, 2015; and

WHEREAS, This year marks the 150th Anniversary of celebrating Juneteenth which began on June 19, 1865, the date Union soldiers under the command of Major General George Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas, with the news that the Civil War had ended and that all slaves were free; and

WHEREAS, One of General Granger's first orders was Order No. 3 which was read aloud to the people of Texas and which stated: "The people of Texas are informed that in accordance with a Proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equity of rights and rights of property between masters and former slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and free laborer."; and

WHEREAS, Many of the newly-freed slaves stayed in their locations to learn about the new employer/employee relationship between themselves and their former masters, while others chose to reach family members in other states, and still others chose to move to the Northern states; and

WHEREAS, Settling into new areas as free men and women brought on new realities and challenges of establishing a heretofore non-existent status for Black people in America; and

WHEREAS, The celebration of Juneteenth allowed freed slaves and their

descendants to recount the memories of that great day in 1865 when freedom was proclaimed, and also served as a release from the pressures of settling into new territories; and

WHEREAS, The Juneteenth Festival of Buffalo was started in 1976 by B.U.I.L.D., a community-based organization, as a culturally relevant alternative to the country's Bicentennial Celebration; murals were painted and vendors set up booths to sell ethnic foods and wares, and entertainment and festivity were abundant; and

WHEREAS, After several years, the Juneteenth Festival outgrew Jefferson Avenue; it is now held in Martin Luther King Jr. Park at the intersection of Best Street and Fillmore Avenue; and

WHEREAS, The goals of Juneteenth Buffalo include: administer educational and cultural programs to enhance awareness of the broad spectrum of African American heritage and culture; assemble, maintain and make available materials on the culture and heritage of African Americans; and encourage, organize and promote the collective participation of organizations which develop strong family ties and ethnic pride and support and promote economic progress in the African American community; and

WHEREAS, While Juneteenth is a time for celebration, it is also a time for reflection, education and self-improvement; celebration participants listen to elders recount the past, attend prayer services, and learn from educational speakers; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 40th consecutive Juneteenth Festival Parade upon the occasion of the Juneteenth 40th Anniversary Gala on May 15, 2015; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Juneteenth Festival Parade Committee.