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LRB097 21734 KXB 70197 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, Juneteenth is the oldest known celebration commemorating the ending of slavery in the United States; and

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WHEREAS, The mission of the State of Illinois Juneteenth Committee reads: To promote and cultivate knowledge and appreciation of African-American history and culture with a focus on education and self-improvement; and

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WHEREAS, It was on June 19, 1865, two-and-a-half years after President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, that Union soldiers landed at Galveston, Texas, with news that the war had ended and that the enslaved were now free; and

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WHEREAS, As freed slaves left plantations and moved to reunite with family members in other states, they encountered a new set of challenges as free men and women; and

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WHEREAS, Recounting the memories of that great day in June of 1865 and its festivities would serve as motivation and relief from the growing pressures encountered in their new homes; and

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WHEREAS, The celebration of June 19th was coined "Juneteenth" and grew with more participation and became a time

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1 for reassuring one another, for praying, and for gathering
2 family members; and

3 WHEREAS, A range of activities were provided for
4 entertainment at early Juneteenth celebrations, many of which
5 continue today; rodeos, fishing, barbecuing, and baseball are
6 just a few of the typical activities that may be held today;
7 and

8 WHEREAS, Juneteenth also focuses on education and
9 self-improvement; guest speakers are often brought in and
10 elders are called upon to recount the events of the past;
11 prayer services are often also a major part of the
12 celebrations; and

13 WHEREAS, Over the last few decades, Juneteenth has
14 continued to enjoy a growing and healthy interest from
15 communities and organizations throughout the country, all with
16 the mission to promote and cultivate knowledge and appreciation
17 of African-American history and culture; and

18 WHEREAS, Today, Juneteenth celebrates African-American
19 freedom while encouraging self-development and respect for all
20 cultures; therefore, be it

21 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE

1 NINETY-SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
2 we proclaim June 19, 2012 as Juneteenth Day in the State of
3 Illinois, in remembrance of the important events of June 19,
4 1865, and encourage all citizens to learn about the important
5 contributions that African-Americans have made to our State,
6 and to the nation as a whole; and be it further

7 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
8 delivered to the State of Illinois Juneteenth Committee as a
9 symbol of our respect and esteem.