

**TOWN OF RICHMOND, RHODE ISLAND
RICHMOND TOWN COUNCIL**

RESOLUTION # 2023 -2

**RESOLUTION URGING THE RHODE ISLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY
TO MAKE JUNETEENTH INDEPENDENCE DAY AN OFFICIAL STATE HOLIDAY**

WHEREAS, on January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued the executive order known as the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing the enslaved people in the ten secessionist Confederate states; and

WHEREAS, although the proclamation freed more than 3.5 million enslaved people, it could not be enforced in the areas still under Confederate control; and

WHEREAS, despite General Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865, the western Confederate Army did not surrender until June 2, and

WHEREAS, on June 19, 1865, Major General Gordon Granger arrived at Galveston, Texas to take command of the federal troops there and enforce the emancipation of those people still enslaved; and

WHEREAS, because many African Americans, including those in slaveholding border states, remained enslaved after the Emancipation Proclamation was issued, in 1865 the United States Congress enacted, and the states ratified, the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, abolishing involuntary servitude, and

WHEREAS, on June 19, 1866, freedmen in Texas commemorated the first anniversary of Major General Granger's arrival as "Jubilee Day," and

WHEREAS, many people throughout the United States now celebrate June 19th as Juneteenth, a day to commemorate the liberation of enslaved African Americans, and

WHEREAS, in 2021, the United States Congress enacted legislation marking June 19th as Juneteenth National Independence Day, a national holiday; and

WHEREAS, the State of Rhode Island has not officially commemorated Juneteenth since 2012, when the Rhode Island Senate approved a resolution urging the people of Rhode Island "to recognize the historical significance of Juneteenth Independence Day; to observe Juneteenth Independence Day with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs; and support the continued celebration of Juneteenth Independence Day," and

WHEREAS, in the spirit of brotherhood, it is appropriate for Rhode Island to adopt Juneteenth Independence Day as an official State holiday,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the members of the Town Council of the Town of Richmond urge the General Assembly to enact legislation making Juneteenth Independence Day an official State holiday, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be provided to the town clerk of each city and town in Rhode Island, to Governor Daniel McKee, to Speaker of the House K. Joseph Shekarchi, to Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio, and to Sen. Elaine J. Morgan and Rep. Megan L. Cotter.

MARK H. TRIMMER,
Richmond Town Council President

ATTEST: _____
ERIN F. LIESE, C.M.C.
Richmond Town Clerk