

**SENATE, No. 19**

---

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

**219th LEGISLATURE**

---

INTRODUCED JUNE 25, 2020

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator STEPHEN M. SWEENEY**  
**District 3 (Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem)**  
**Senator SANDRA B. CUNNINGHAM**  
**District 31 (Hudson)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

**Senators Addiego, Beach, Bateman, A.M.Bucco, Codey, Cruz-Perez, Cryan, Diegnan, Gill, Gopal, Greenstein, T.Kean, Lagana, Madden, Pou, Rice, Ruiz, Sacco, Sarlo, Scutari, Singleton, Singer, B.Smith, Stack, Turner, Vitale and Weinberg**

**SYNOPSIS**

Designates June 19, known as Juneteenth Day, as State and public holiday.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



**(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/29/2020)**

S19 SWEENEY, CUNNINGHAM

2

1 AN ACT concerning legal holidays and amending various parts of the  
2 statutory law.

3

4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*  
5 *of New Jersey:*

6

7 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

8 a. The Emancipation Proclamation was issued by President  
9 Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863, freeing all enslaved people  
10 living in Confederate states.

11 b. However, it was not until June 19, 1865 that enslaved Black  
12 Americans in Galveston, Texas learned that the Civil War was over,  
13 and they were free.

14 c. It is important to remember that neither the Emancipation  
15 Proclamation nor the end of the Confederacy freed all enslaved  
16 people, instead it only freed enslaved people in the Confederate  
17 states.

18 d. Enslaved people living in Union states that bordered the  
19 Confederacy were not freed until the ratification of the 13th  
20 Amendment on December 6, 1865.

21 e. Additionally, Black Americans were not fully recognized as  
22 citizens until the passage of the 14th Amendment in 1868, and Black  
23 men were largely prevented from voting until the passage of the 15th  
24 Amendment in 1870.

25 f. Juneteenth commemorates June 19, when word of freedom  
26 finally reached the enslaved people in Texas and jubilant celebrations  
27 evolved into a general celebration of freedom.

28 g. Juneteenth is also a reminder for all Americans of the  
29 hardships that Black Americans have endured for centuries in this  
30 country and an example of Black Americans often being the last to  
31 benefit from any change.

32 h. Despite the passage of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments  
33 in the 19th Century, Black Americans were still fighting for civil  
34 rights throughout the 20th Century.

35 i. 100 years following the Emancipation Proclamation and the  
36 Reconstruction Amendments, Black Americans were fighting to pass  
37 civil rights reforms that would truly reflect the message and meaning  
38 behind that proclamation and those amendments.

39 j. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Civil Rights Act of 1968  
40 were monumental achievements for Black Americans and yet  
41 another, long overdue step in their quest for equality.

42 k. However, over 50 years later, Black Americans still face  
43 oppression in many forms in the United States.

44 l. Black Americans are often viewed as “less than” by far too  
45 many in the United States, and this view of them is easily documented

**EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.**

**Matter underlined thus is new matter.**

1 in reports on health outcomes, employment, housing, education, and  
2 incarceration.

3 m. For example, the number of Black Americans who have died  
4 during the COVID-19 pandemic is exceedingly disproportionate to  
5 that of other Americans.

6 n. Black Americans are also viewed as a threat by many in the  
7 United States, which often leads to unnecessarily combative and  
8 violent confrontations with police officers in the country.

9 o. While only accounting for 13 percent of the United States  
10 population, Black Americans are killed in over 25 percent of police-  
11 related shootings, often while unarmed and not committing violent  
12 offenses.

13 p. While many in New Jersey may believe this does not relate to  
14 the experiences of Black Americans living in the State, they would  
15 be wrong, as New Jersey has a long history of racism and  
16 discrimination.

17 q. One example is in schools where, even to this day, the vast  
18 majority of Black children in the State attend schools that are over 70  
19 percent minority, segregating them from the white children in the  
20 State.

21 r. Designating Juneteenth as a State holiday may shed a light on  
22 the daily life experiences of Black Americans in this State and lead  
23 to progress, as the time has long passed for Black Americans to feel  
24 safe and equal in the United States.

25 s. Juneteenth can simultaneously serve as a reminder of how  
26 Black Americans are often the last to benefit from good news in this  
27 country and a promise to eliminate this gap in the future.

28

29 2. Section 25 of P.L.2008, c.89 (C.11A:6-24.1) is amended to  
30 read as follows:

31 25. a. Paid holidays granted to all State government employees  
32 each calendar year shall be limited to the following:

33 (1) January 1, known as New Year's Day;

34 (2) the third Monday in January, known as Martin Luther King's  
35 Birthday;

36 (3) the third Monday in February, known as Washington's  
37 Birthday, which shall be known and celebrated as Presidents Day in  
38 this State;

39 (4) the day designated and known as Good Friday;

40 (5) the last Monday in May, known as Memorial Day;

41 (6) June 19, known as Juneteenth Day;

42 [(6)] (7) July 4, known as Independence Day;

43 [(7)] (8) the first Monday in September, known as Labor Day;

44 [(8)] (9) the second Monday in October, known as Columbus  
45 Day;

46 [(9)] (10) November 11, known as Armistice Day or Veterans'  
47 Day;

1       [(10)] (11) the fourth Thursday in November, known as  
2 Thanksgiving Day;

3       [(11)] (12) December 25, known as Christmas Day; and

4       [(12)] (13) any general election day in this State.

5       b. The provisions of this section shall not impair any collective  
6 bargaining agreement or contract in effect on the effective date of  
7 P.L.2008, c.89. The provision of this section shall take effect in the  
8 calendar year following the expiration of the collective bargaining  
9 agreements or contracts covering a majority of the Executive Branch  
10 employees in effect on the effective date of P.L.2008, c.89.

11 (cf: P.L.2008, c.89, s.25)

12

13       3. R.S.36:1-1 is amended to read as follows:

14       36:1-1. a. The following days in each year shall, for all purposes  
15 whatsoever as regards the presenting for payment or acceptance, and  
16 of the protesting and giving notice of dishonor, of bills of exchange,  
17 bank checks and promissory notes be treated and considered as the  
18 first day of the week, commonly called Sunday, and as public  
19 holidays, except as provided under subsection d. of this section:  
20 January 1, known as New Year's Day; the third Monday in January,  
21 known as Martin Luther King's Birthday; February 12, known as  
22 Lincoln's Birthday; the third Monday in February, known as  
23 Washington's Birthday; the day designated and known as Good  
24 Friday; the last Monday in May, known as Memorial Day; June 19,  
25 known as Juneteenth Day; July 4, known as Independence Day; the  
26 first Monday in September, known as Labor Day; the second Monday  
27 in October, known as Columbus Day; November 11, known as  
28 Armistice Day or Veterans' Day; the fourth Thursday in November,  
29 known as Thanksgiving Day; December 25, known as Christmas  
30 Day; any general election day in this State; every Saturday; and any  
31 day heretofore or hereafter appointed, ordered or recommended by  
32 the Governor of this State, or the President of the United States, as a  
33 day of fasting and prayer, or other religious observance, or as a bank  
34 holiday or holidays. All such bills, checks and notes, otherwise  
35 presentable for acceptance or payment on any of the days herein  
36 enumerated, shall be deemed to be payable and be presentable for  
37 acceptance or payment on the secular or business day next  
38 succeeding any such holiday.

39       b. Whenever any of the days herein enumerated can and shall  
40 fall on a Sunday, the Monday next following shall, for any of the  
41 purposes herein enumerated be deemed a public holiday, except as  
42 provided under subsection d. of this section; and bills of exchange,  
43 checks and promissory notes which otherwise would be presentable  
44 for acceptance or payment on such Monday shall be deemed to be  
45 presentable for acceptance or payment on the secular or business day  
46 next succeeding such holiday.

1 c. In construing this section, every Saturday shall, until 12  
2 o'clock noon, be deemed a secular or business day, except as is  
3 hereinbefore provided in regard to bills of exchange, bank checks and  
4 promissory notes, and the days herein enumerated except bank  
5 holidays and Saturdays shall be considered as the first day of the  
6 week, commonly called Sunday, and public holidays, for all purposes  
7 whatsoever as regards the transaction of business in the public offices  
8 of this State, or counties of this State, except as provided under  
9 subsection d. of this section; but on all other days or half days, except  
10 Sunday or as otherwise provided by law, such offices shall be kept  
11 open for the transaction of business.

12 d. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsections a. through c. of  
13 this section, when the provisions of this subsection take effect, the  
14 following day each calendar year shall not be considered a public  
15 holiday for the purposes of conducting State government business:

16 February 12, known as Lincoln's Birthday.

17 All public offices of State government in this State shall be open  
18 on this day for the transaction of business.

19 (cf: P.L.2008, c.89, s.26)

20

21 4. Section 2 of P.L.2004, c.3 (C.36:2-80) is amended to read as  
22 follows:

23 2. **【The third Saturday in】** June 19 of each year is hereby  
24 designated as "Juneteenth **【Independence】** Day" in New Jersey to  
25 commemorate and celebrate the emancipation of African-Americans  
26 and foster respect for all cultures.

27 (cf: P.L.2004, c.3, s.2)

28

29 5. This act shall take effect immediately.

30

31

32

#### STATEMENT

33

34 This bill designates June 19 in each year, known as Juneteenth  
35 Day, as a State and public holiday.

36 Juneteenth commemorates June 19, 1865, when Union General  
37 Gordon Granger rode into Galveston, Texas to inform enslaved  
38 people of the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation and of their freedom.  
39 The announcement from General Granger led to celebration and  
40 jubilation, which has continued each year in various forms  
41 throughout the United States for over 150 years.