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ACR-87 The 150th anniversary of Juneteenth. (2015-2016)

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Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 87

CHAPTER 121

Relative to the 150th anniversary of Juneteenth.

[Filed with Secretary of State July 21, 2015.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 87, Ridley-Thomas. The 150th anniversary of Juneteenth.

This measure would recognize June 19, 2015, as the 150th anniversary of Juneteenth and would urge the people of California to join in celebrating Juneteenth as a day to honor and reflect on the significant role that African Americans have played in the history of the United States and how they have enriched society through their steadfast commitment to promoting unity and equality.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, June 19, 2015, marks the 150th anniversary of Juneteenth; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth, also known as "Juneteenth Independence Day," "Emancipation Day," "Emancipation Celebration," and "Freedom Day," is the oldest African American holiday observance in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth commemorates the strong survival instinct of African Americans who were first brought to this country stacked in the bottom of slave ships in a month-long journey across the Atlantic Ocean known as the "Middle Passage"; and

WHEREAS, Events in the history of the United States that led to the start of the Civil War in 1861 centered on sectional differences between the North and the South that were based on the economic and social divergence caused by the existence of slavery; and

WHEREAS, In 1862, the first clear signs that the end of slavery was imminent appeared when laws abolishing slavery were adopted in the territories of Oklahoma, Nebraska, Colorado, and New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, In September 1862, President Lincoln issued the celebrated Emancipation Proclamation, warning the rebellious Confederate states that he would declare their slaves "forever free" if those states did not return to the Union by January 1, 1863; and

WHEREAS, Enforcement of the Emancipation Proclamation occurred only in Confederate states that were under Union Army control; and

WHEREAS, On January 31, 1865, Congress passed the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, abolishing slavery throughout the United States and its territories; and

WHEREAS, Spontaneous celebration erupted throughout the country when African Americans learned of their freedom; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth, or June 19, 1865, is considered the date when the last slaves in America were freed when General Gordon Granger rode into Galveston, Texas, and issued General Order No. 3, almost two and one-half years after President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation; and

WHEREAS, Observance of Juneteenth, a reminder of emancipation, spread from Texas to the neighboring states of Louisiana, Arkansas, and Oklahoma, as well as Alabama, Florida, and California, where many African American Texans migrated; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth symbolizes freedom, celebrates the abolishment of slavery, and reminds all Americans of the significant contributions of African Americans to our society; and

WHEREAS, A growing number of American and African American cultural institutions have sponsored Juneteenth cultural events designed to make all Americans aware of this celebration; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth celebrations are a tribute to those African Americans who fought so long and worked so hard to make the dream of equality a reality; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature of the State of California hereby recognizes June 19, 2015, as the 150th anniversary of Juneteenth; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature urges the people of California to join in celebrating Juneteenth as a day to honor and reflect on the significant role that African Americans have played in the history of the United States and how they have enriched society through their steadfast commitment to promoting unity and equality; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.