



January 16, 2023

Chair Ginny Klevorn
State and Local Government Finance and Policy
Re: Juneteenth Holiday (H.F. 48, Richardson)

Chair Klevorn and Members,

The Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage offers the following statement in strong support of recognizing Juneteenth, June 19, as a state holiday (H.F. 48, Richardson).

Juneteenth is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States. Also known as Freedom Day, Jubilee Day, and Emancipation Day, Juneteenth honors Black freedom and achievement. For more than 155 years, Juneteenth has been celebrated by Black people all over the country.

Although people have observed Juneteenth for many years, states have only recently started recognizing it as a state holiday. In 1980, Texas was the first to make this historic day a holiday. Yet, it took almost another 30 years for other states to follow their example. To this day, most states do not recognize Juneteenth as an actual holiday. In fact, the federal government only signed the holiday into federal law in 2021.

For years, the Council has expressed support for Minnesota declaring Juneteenth as a statewide holiday to be celebrated on June 19th. This year, Minnesota can move beyond simply recognizing Juneteenth and make it an official state holiday. We believe that H.F. 48 is an important and timely bill. We hope you support the passage of Juneteenth as a recognized state holiday, and we thank Rep. Richardson for her leadership in bringing the bill forward.

Sincerely,

Linda Sloan | Executive Director
Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage