

Whereas

Whereas, since the inception of the United States, beginning with the first known Europeans to set foot on this land in 1492, peoples of non- western European descent have had challenges obtaining equal and ethical consideration, respect, and treatment by those of western European descent; and

Whereas, voluntary and involuntary indentured servitude in the United States began as a method of obtaining cheap labor based on class, social position, or criminal punishment, it soon evolved into involuntary slavery based on race; and

Whereas, on September 22, 1862, then Union President Abraham Lincoln issued, and later made effective and signed on January 1, 1863, the Emancipation Proclamation, which declared the freedom of slaves in Confederate states which rebelled against the Union, tied slavery to the Civil War and allowed Blacks to fight on behalf of the Union; and

Whereas, on June 19, 1865, the news of the Emancipation Proclamation and its impact was presented to the enslaved people of Galveston Bay, Texas, informing them of their freedom; and

Whereas, on December 6, 1865, the 13th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States was ratified, thus ending slavery and non-conditional servitude in the United States; and

Whereas, we honor June 19th, now known as the portmanteau Juneteenth as the day we celebrate the end of slavery in the United States; and

Whereas, Juneteenth has evolved into a way to pay homage to ancestors and celebrate Black culture, liberation, and the achievements of Black Americans. This holiday also presents a powerful opportunity for critical reflection, social action, and examination of our progress or lack thereof towards racial equity and justice; and

Whereas, Juneteenth is a time to reflect on where we've been; where we are; and to create a vision for where we desire to go and do our part in rewriting a narrative that often depicts the Black person as downtrodden, troublesome, threatening, unworthy, undervalued, and less than human; and

Whereas, as we re-write our narrative, we take pride in acknowledging our struggle while also grabbing our story by the reins and guiding it in a graceful way to speak our truth of resilience, triumph, value, worth, grace, poise, brilliance, and excellence; and

Whereas, we demand that our truth must be heard loud and clear... We are declaring The Black family, the black community, and the black experience as valuable, powerful, majestic, principled, and flourishing despite the narrative of struggle, oppression and restriction; and

Whereas, Black resilience, brilliance, and power can be found weaved throughout our existence and will continue to re write the narrative of the black family and break barriers, challenge the status quo, and create opportunities for our contributions to be highlighted and embraced

Whereas, we call upon all people to join us in this celebration of freedom from physical, mental, emotional, financial, ethical, moralistic, and spiritual slavery that contributes to harm of self, harm of family, and harm of community regardless of race, age, gender, or ability; and

Whereas, we will continue to rise up and rise above these suppressive, oppressive, exclusive, and depressive ways of a racist world that can often be found seeking to destroy the true essence of the black diaspora;

Now, therefore, I, Keith Wilson, Mayor of the City of Portland, Oregon, the “City of Roses,” do hereby proclaim June 19, 2025, to be

Juneteenth

in Portland and encourage all businesses and community members to commemorate this holiday.

