

House Bill 973

By: Representatives Paris of the 142<sup>nd</sup>, Beverly of the 143<sup>rd</sup>, Bennett of the 94<sup>th</sup>, Trammell of the 132<sup>nd</sup>, Smyre of the 135<sup>th</sup>, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

1 To amend Code Section 1-4-1 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to public  
2 and legal holidays and leave for observance of religious holidays not specifically provided  
3 for, so as to designate June 19 of each year as a state holiday; to provide for legislative  
4 findings; to revise the number of holidays that are observed in Georgia; to provide for related  
5 matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

7 **SECTION 1.**

8 The General Assembly finds that:

- 9 (1) The Emancipation Proclamation was issued by President Abraham Lincoln on  
10 January 1, 1863, and General Lee surrendered in April 1865, officially ending the United  
11 States Civil War;
- 12 (2) News of the Emancipation Proclamation and the end of slavery did not reach Texas,  
13 Oklahoma, Louisiana, Arkansas, and California until June 19, 1865;
- 14 (3) On that evening, thousands of former slaves flooded the streets in spontaneous  
15 celebration, rejoicing in the news of their long awaited freedom;
- 16 (4) To commemorate the joyous events of June 19, 1865, June 19 has been observed as  
17 "Juneteenth";
- 18 (5) "Juneteenth" and similar Emancipation Day celebrations recognizing the abolition  
19 of slavery are officially observed in numerous states and Washington, D.C.;
- 20 (6) Americans of all colors, creeds, cultures, religions, and countries of origin share in  
21 a common love of and respect for freedom, as well as the determination to protect their  
22 right to freedom through the democratic institutions by which the tenets of freedom are  
23 guaranteed and protected; and
- 24 (7) It is only fitting and proper that the State of Georgia appropriately recognize as a  
25 state holiday this glorious event marking the end of slavery and the beginning of freedom  
26 for so many who had wrongfully suffered in this state and nation.

27

**SECTION 2.**

28 Code Section 1-4-1 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to public and legal  
29 holidays and leave for observance of religious holidays not specifically provided for, is  
30 amended by revising subsections (a) and (b) as follows:

31 "(a) The State of Georgia shall recognize and observe as public and legal holidays:

32 (1) All days which have been designated as of January 1, 1984, as public and legal  
33 holidays by the federal government; ~~and~~

34 (2) June 19 of each year; and

35 (3) All other days designated and proclaimed by the Governor as public and legal  
36 holidays or as days of fasting and prayer or other religious observance. In such  
37 designation, the Governor shall include at least one of the following dates: January 19,  
38 April 26, or June 3, or a suitable date in lieu thereof to commemorate the event or events  
39 now observed by such dates.

40 (b) The Governor shall close all state offices and facilities a minimum of ~~12~~ 13 days  
41 throughout the year and not more than ~~12~~ 13 days in observance of the public and legal  
42 holidays and other days set forth in subsection (a) of this Code section and shall specify the  
43 days state offices and facilities shall be closed for such observances."

44

**SECTION 3.**

45 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.