



Office of the Commissioners

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PROCLAMATION

Juneteenth

June 16, 2021

WHEREAS, Lancaster County is a welcoming community where we strive to honor the historical experiences of all Lancastrians, including African Americans, who for too long have been denied the founding promise of America—that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness—and we continue the important work for equality today; and

WHEREAS, historically, due to its location along the Mason-Dixon Line, Lancaster County played a significant role in the freedom of enslaved African Americans by way of the Underground Railroad; this history includes the Christiana Resistance in 1851, where armed citizens of Lancaster County, both Black and white, actively resisted slave catchers seeking to recapture escaped slaves here; and

WHEREAS, Lancaster County was home to a number of prominent Black and white abolitionists, including, but not limited to, William Whipper, Lydia Hamilton Smith, and Lancaster County Congressman Thaddeus Stevens, all of whom advocated for freedom for all African Americans; and

WHEREAS, according to the United States Census Slave Registers, all African Americans living in Lancaster County were free by 1850; and

WHEREAS, the Civil War sparked progress toward making the Founding Fathers' vision of equality a constitutional reality, starting with Abraham Lincoln writing the Emancipation Proclamation and continuing with the passing of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution, formally abolishing slavery, offering African Americans equal protection by law, and granting African Americans the right to vote, respectively; and

WHEREAS, on January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, declaring that all enslaved African Americans "shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free"; and

WHEREAS, word traveled to the edge of the Country slowly, but made it to Galveston, Texas, the westernmost Confederate state, where General Granger read aloud the Emancipation Proclamation on June 19, 1865, sharing that slavery had been abolished; and



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County Commissioners

Joshua G. Parsons, Chairman
Ray D'Agostino, Vice-Chairman
Craig E. Lehman


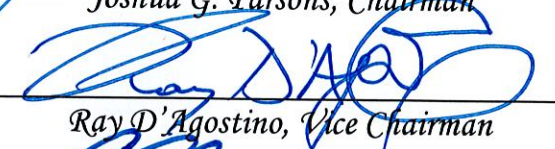

WHEREAS, this day came to be known as Juneteenth, and was first honored the very next year in Texas on June 19, 1866, with a jubilant, hopeful celebration filled with picnics, music, and prayer within the Black community; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth celebrations take place across the Country each year in honor of the resilience of the Black community and in homage to our African American brothers and sisters who bravely paved the way for freedom in America; and

WHEREAS, forty-seven states and the District of Columbia recognize Juneteenth as a holiday or day of observance, including Pennsylvania, which adopted Juneteenth National Freedom Day as a state holiday in 2019.

NOW, THEREFORE, WE, THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF LANCASTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA that the County of Lancaster does hereby celebrate June 19, 2021, as Juneteenth in Lancaster County, and invite all Lancastrians to reflect upon the spirit of the day, embrace the beauty in diversity, and pledge to honor the dignity, culture, and achievement of African Americans in every sphere of life in this County, Commonwealth, and Nation.




Joshua G. Parsons, Chairman

Ray D'Agostino, Vice Chairman

Craig E. Lehman

Board of Commissioners of
Lancaster County, Pennsylvania

