

# UNIVERSITY OF IOWA STUDENT GOVERNMENT

## Joint Legislative Session

September 13, 2022

J.R. 3

**Sponsors:** GPSG Delegate Lily Kraft on behalf of GPSG Director Sarah-Rose Ballard and USG Senators Amisha Mohanty and Ijeoma Ogbonna.

**Joint Senate Action:** Passed/Failed/Tabled

### A Joint Resolution

On the subject of establishing Juneteenth as a University holiday.

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#### Section 1. Short Title

This resolution may be cited as the “Joint Resolution on Establishing Juneteenth as a University Holiday.”

#### Section 2. Background

On June 17th, 2021, President Biden signed bipartisan legislation establishing Juneteenth, or June 19th, as an official federal holiday. Juneteenth commemorates the date on which the last of the enslaved Black Americans learned they were free. While President Lincoln had delivered the Emancipation Proclamation about two and half years earlier, in 1863, news of slavery abolishment was slow to reach those affected. Making Juneteenth a federal holiday sets a precedent for smaller governing bodies to establish June 19th as an observed holiday within their institutions. Student Government leaders received an email from the Board of Regents staff in the summer of 2021 that applauded the Federal Government’s action but did not answer whether or not the Board would take similar action. The student governments of the University of Iowa, University of Northern Iowa, and Iowa State University call on the Board of Regents to make Juneteenth an official holiday for Iowa’s Public Universities. Student leaders understand the concerns regarding this decision, which include, but are not limited to: removing an instructional day during the summer semester and losing a workday close to the end of the fiscal year. Although we respect the previously listed concerns, we recognize the ability of faculty, students, and staff to be resilient, flexible, and adaptable when it comes to last minute changes. Furthermore, we stress that the importance of commemorating one of the more important holidays in the Black community is vital during this time of widescale progress for equality.

While we desire for Juneteenth to become an official holiday for Iowa's Public Universities, we acknowledge that the work of diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and justice for all marginalized communities does not end. Black students, staff, and faculty have made it clear there is more work to be done to make our schools safe and supportive. This work will continue to be a priority for our student governments, and we will continue to advocate that it is a priority for the Board of Regents. The small first step of designating Juneteenth as an official holiday for Iowa's Public Universities will demonstrate solidarity with and celebration of the Black members of our communities.

### **Section 3. Position**

As Juneteenth has been federally recognized as a day of celebration, USG and GPSG encourage the Board of Regents to follow suit and commemorate this important day as it would any other nationally recognized holiday.

*Therefore and be it resolved*, USG and GPSG urge the Board of Regents to commemorate Juneteenth as a university holiday.

*Resolved*, USG and GPSG recognize that the diversity, equity, and inclusion work on campus does not end with the recognition of Juneteenth and pledges to continue to work towards a more inclusive and equitable environment for every member of the campus community.

*Resolved*, USG and GPSG will continue to work with the Office of DEI, other campus partners, and student activists to further the DEI efforts on campus.

### **4. Enactment Clause**

Be it enacted by University of Iowa Undergraduate Student Government and Graduate and Professional Student Government upon the signatures of President Johnson and President Crow.

*I hereby attest and certify that this bill originated from the 2022-2023 Joint Session.*

  
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USG Speaker of the Senate Alexis Carfrae

  
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GPSG Cabinet Director Grace Bryant

Patrick Johnson,

USG President Patrick Johnson

Amber D. Crow,

GPSG President Amber Crow

APPROVED on 9/13/2022, 2022