



Commemorating Juneteenth 2025

Sacramento, CA – Happy Juneteenth! On June 19, 1865, Union troops arrived in Galveston, Texas, to enforce the Emancipation Proclamation. While the Emancipation Proclamation, issued by President Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863, declared that all persons held as slaves in the Confederate states were to be freed, it was not fully implemented across the country, and many enslaved people in Texas continued to be held in bondage after the Civil War ended. Therefore, Juneteenth marks the effective date for the end of slavery in Texas, but it was not the only date when slavery officially ended in the United States. Delaware and Kentucky were the last states where slavery was still legal at the time of Juneteenth, and they continued to allow it until the 13th Amendment took effect in December 1865.

Thinking about this day causes me to reflect on the history of our great country. The Constitution of the United States and the Declaration of Independence were written approximately 236 years ago. The preamble to the constitution effective March 4, 1789, states, “We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”¹ The opening of the Declaration of Independence, adopted by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776, states, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, 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.”²

“Let freedom ring” is a patriotic phrase from the song “America (My Country, 'Tis of Thee), written in 1831 by Samuel Francis Smith. This powerful metaphor was used by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in his “I Have a Dream” speech in 1963 to symbolize his vision for racial equality and justice. The phrase also refers to the state of not being imprisoned or enslaved, and the right to think, speak, or act as one desires without hindrance or restraint. Liberty and freedom are part of the bedrock of our country.

May we celebrate our freedom and freedom for all.

The Honorable Deborah D. Lobre has served as a judge on the Sacramento Superior Court bench since 2020.

¹ The spelling and punctuation reflect the original.

² Ibid.