



Office of

## Representative Hannah E. Kane Commonwealth of Massachusetts

*For Immediate Release*

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### **Rep. Kane supports designating Juneteenth Independence Day as an official state holiday**

**BOSTON** – State Representative Hannah Kane (R-Shrewsbury) recently joined with her colleagues in the House of Representatives to support designating Juneteenth Independence Day as an official state holiday in Massachusetts.

The proposal was adopted as an amendment to a \$1.1 billion supplemental budget approved by the House of Representatives on June 24. The amendment passed on a vote of 158-0.

Juneteenth Independence Day commemorates the end of slavery in the United States. Its origins can be traced back to June 19, 1865, when Union General Gordon Granger and his troops arrived in Galveston, Texas to announce the Civil War was over and the state's slaves were now free as a result of President Abraham Lincoln's issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863.

"I am proud to have joined with my colleagues in the House to designate Juneteenth as an official state holiday and honor its significance in the history of our nation. The end of the Civil War marked the end of the darkest chapter in American history- the owning of slaves. It is important to remember we all still have much work to do to ensure true, systemic racial equality in our country. Observing Juneteenth as an official state holiday is a small step in the right direction," remarked Representative Kane.

Massachusetts has observed Juneteenth Independence Day since 2007, but not as a legal holiday. Under current state law, the governor is required annually to "issue a proclamation setting apart the nineteenth of June as Juneteenth Independence Day, to be observed on the Sunday that is closest to June 19<sup>th</sup> of each year." The state observance recognizes "the significant contributions individuals of African descent have made to the Commonwealth and to the United States."

Representative Kane said that in addition to elevating Juneteenth Independence Day to full holiday status, the House amendment provides for the holiday to be observed on June 19, regardless of the day it falls on.

The amended supplemental budget, with the Juneteenth Independence Day language, now moves to the Senate for further action.

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