

**CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY**  
**MOTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_**

**TITLE:** Proclaiming June 19, 2024 as JUNETEENTH in Chautauqua County

**AT THE REQUEST OF:** Legislators Wilfong, Parker, Bankoski:

WHEREAS, our Juneteenth National Independence Day, otherwise known simply as Juneteenth and celebrated each year on June 19<sup>th</sup>, is a national celebration of the freeing of our country’s enslaved people by way of Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation; and

WHEREAS, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863 as a strategic wartime effort to cripple the Southern economy and recruit much-needed “Freedmen” soldiers as Union troops; and  
Whereas, the Emancipation Proclamation did not free all the people enslaved in the United States, but only those enslaved in the eleven Confederate states (and the areas within those states not under Union Army control); and

WHEREAS, the people enslaved in Texas were made unaware of the Emancipation Proclamation and their freedom until June 19, 1865 when Union troops arrived in Texas two and a half years following the Proclamation’s effective date and two months after the Civil War ended in April 1865; and

WHEREAS, human enslavement remained otherwise legal and within the “loyal” Union enslaving states of Maryland, Delaware, Kentucky, and Missouri throughout the Civil War and did not end in the whole of the United States until passage of the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution on December 6, 1865; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth has become a day of profound weight and power; a day in which we remember the moral stain and terrible toll of human enslavement on our country — what is so often called America’s original sin — a long legacy of systemic racism, inequality, and inhumanity; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth’s profound weight and power also recognizes and celebrates the strength and indomitable human spirit of Black Americans especially and is a day of opportunity for all Americans to recommit ourselves to the work of equity, equality, and justice and continue to make real the ideals of our founding documents; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth has been celebrated formally in Chautauqua County since 1996, declared a New York State Holiday in 2020, and declared a National Holiday in 2021; now therefore

LET IT BE KNOWN That the Chautauqua County Legislature, hereby recognizes and celebrates and proclaims June 19, 2024 as Juneteenth in Chautauqua County; and be it further

LET IF FURTHER BE KNOWN, That the Chautauqua County Legislature urges all residents to remember our country’s history represented in this day and celebrate and recommit ourselves to the work of equity, equality, and justice that Juneteenth represents.