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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 1/21/06

SPONSOR Stapleton LAST UPDATED _____ HB 228

SHORT TITLE Create Juneteenth Freedom Day SB _____

ANALYST Lewis

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY06	FY07		
	NFI		

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

New Mexico Office of African American Affairs (OAAA)
 Martin Luther King Jr. State Commission (MLK)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 228 creates “Juneteenth Freedom Day” to be commemorated on the third Saturday in June of each year and to be observed by:

- A. reflecting on the history of African-American slavery in the United States; the experience of Africans brought to the United States in a five- to twelve-week journey across the Atlantic, the deaths of thousands of Africans who died in inhuman conditions of passage; the abuse of African-American slaves, including whipping, castration, branding and rape; the importance of the Thirteenth Amendment of the United States constitution abolishing slavery throughout the United States and its territories; and the significance of June 19, 1865, the day on which the message of freedom and abolition reached the western states; and
- B. recognizing the importance of Americans of African descent as American citizens and New Mexico residents.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

According to the Juneteenth.com web site, “Juneteenth is the oldest known celebration commemorating the ending of slavery in the United States. Dating back to 1865, it was on June 19th

that the Union soldiers, led by Major General Gordon Granger, landed at Galveston, Texas with news that the war had ended and that the enslaved were now free. Note that this was two and a half years after President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation - which had become official January 1, 1863."

Expanding on the history of the Juneteenth celebration, the web site notes that, "In the early years, little interest existed outside the African American community in participation in the celebrations. In some cases, there was outwardly exhibited resistance by barring the use of public property for the festivities. Most of the festivities found themselves out in rural areas around rivers and creeks that could provide for additional activities such as fishing, horseback riding and barbecues. Often the church grounds was the site for such activities. Eventually, as African Americans became land owners, land was donated and dedicated for these festivities. One of the earliest documented land purchases in the name of Juneteenth was organized by Rev. Jack Yates. This fund-raising effort yielded \$1000 and the purchase of Emancipation Park in Houston, Texas. In Mexia, the local Juneteenth organization purchased Booker T. Washington Park, which had become the Juneteenth celebration site in 1898. There are accounts of Juneteenth activities being interrupted and halted by white landowners demanding that their laborers return to work. However, it seems most allowed their workers the day off and some even made donations of food and money. For decades these annual celebrations flourished, growing continuously with each passing year. In Booker T. Washington Park, as many as 20,000 African Americans once flowed through during the course of a week, making the celebration one of the state's largest."

In modern times, Juneteenth was first recognized as an official state holiday in Texas in 1980. Since then there Juneteenth activities have been sponsored by the Smithsonian and other institutions. According to Juneteenth.com, "Juneteenth today, celebrates African American freedom while encouraging self-development and respect for all cultures." Juneteenth is now recognized as a state holiday or state holiday observance in Texas, Oklahoma, Florida, Delaware, Idaho, Alaska, Iowa, California, Wyoming, Missouri, Connecticut, Illinois, Louisiana, New Jersey, New York, Arkansas, Kentucky, Michigan and also in the District of Columbia.

ML/yr