



WRITTEN STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD

FOR THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR HB 2168 ESTABLISHES JUNETEENTH AS LEGAL STATE HOLIDAY

OREGON STATE SENATE HEARING

TUESDAY, APRIL 27, 2021

BY JENELLE JACK, DIRECTOR OF JUNETEENTH OR AND GRANDDAUGHTER OF THE LATE CLARA MAE PEOPLES "MOTHER OF JUNETEENTH"

I Jenelle Jack submit this written testimony for the record for the April 27, 2021 hearing before the Senate Committee on Establishing Juneteenth as a Legal State Holiday.

When we think of 4th of July, we think of Independence Day, fireworks, freedom and celebration. However, in 1776 everyone was not free. The country was still divided, and July 4th has been a household name for many years.

Juneteenth is just as important. Actually, Juneteenth is the only day that **"All Americans"** are free. It is America's 2nd Independence Day, Freedom Day and is also a cause for celebration for everyone. Imagine celebrating a friend's birthday and then when your birthday comes around there is no celebration.

Juneteenth is a significant part of history and yet it has remained widely unknown and seldom mentioned and taught. I was fortunate to have grown up celebrating Juneteenth and taught on the significance of the meaning of the holiday. My grandmother the late, Clara Mae Peoples remained a strong advocate for Juneteenth and paving a path for us to follow. My grandmother initiated the first Juneteenth Celebration in Oregon while working in the shipyards back in 1945. Her dedication to bringing the awareness of Juneteenth throughout the city and state remained on the top of her list up until her passing. She was named "Mother of Juneteenth", back in 2011 by the National Juneteenth Observance Foundation by the late Doc Myers and organization working to get Juneteenth recognized as a National Holiday.

My family has a deep passion regarding Juneteenth. From my grandmother, the late Clara Mae Peoples, my cousin the late, Doris Rush and myself who have all been Directors of Juneteenth in Oregon. We're dedicated to connecting and strengthening communities and sharing knowledge of the history of Juneteenth. Juneteenth Oregon is a family-oriented, community empowered organization.

In my support of HB 2168. Oregon has been celebrating Juneteenth for over 40+ years. It is time that The State of Oregon recognizes the significance of Juneteenth, the meaning and the history. Our residents and our communities have the right to celebrate the day that “All Americans” are free and no one feel left out.

Thank you for hearing my testimony in support of HB 2168.

Sincerely,

Jenelle Jack

Director of Juneteenth Oregon

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