

AN ACT

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IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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*Codification  
District of  
Columbia  
Official Code*

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Publisher

To amend the District of Columbia Government Comprehensive Merit Personnel Act of 1978, to make April 16th, the District of Columbia Emancipation Day, a recognized legal public holiday.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this act may be cited as the "District of Columbia Emancipation Day Amendment Act of 2004".

Sec. 2. The Council finds that:

(1) When President Lincoln signed An Act for the Release of certain Persons held to Service or Labor in the District of Columbia ("District of Columbia Emancipation Act") on April 16, 1862, freeing all slaves in the District, the law provided for immediate emancipation, compensation of up to \$300 for each slave to loyal Unionist masters, voluntary colonization of former slaves to colonies outside the United States, and payments of up to \$100 to each former slave choosing emigration. The federal government paid almost \$1 million for the freedom of approximately 3,100 former slaves.

(2) It is important to the descendants of those free blacks and slaves, and to all other citizens in the District that this important moment in our country's and the District's history be formally recognized by the District.

(3) June 19, 1865 ("Juneteenth"), the day that the last slaves in the state of Texas were notified that President Lincoln had signed the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, is celebrated annually in more than 205 cities and is a legal state holiday in Texas, Oklahoma, Florida, Delaware, and Iowa.

(4) In 1997, the United States Senate adopted a joint resolution recognizing Juneteenth as the true independence day for African-American citizens.

(5) The legal public holiday of the District of Columbia Emancipation Day would commemorate and celebrate April 16, 1862 as the day President Lincoln signed the District of Columbia Emancipation Act ending slavery in the District of Columbia, 9 months before the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863. The District of

Columbia Emancipation Day will symbolize for Americans the triumph of the human spirit over the cruelty of slavery.

Sec. 3. Section 1202 of the District of Columbia Government Comprehensive Merit Personnel Act of 1978, effective March 3, 1979 (D.C. Law 2-139; D.C. Official Code §1-612.02(c)), is amended as follows:

**Amend  
§ 1-612.02**

- (a) The existing text is designated as paragraph (1).
- (b) A new paragraph (2) is added to read as follows:

“(2) April 16 of each year starting in 2005 shall be District of Columbia Emancipation Day, which shall be a legal public holiday for the purpose of pay and leave of employees scheduled to work on that day; provided, that in 2005 and 2006, it shall be celebrated on the date of April 16 and not on the following Monday.”

Sec. 4. Sense of the Council.

It is the sense of the Council that the federal government should recognize the District of Columbia Emancipation Day. The Council urges Congresswoman Norton to introduce legislation in Congress to recognize this day.

Sec. 5. Fiscal impact statement.

The Council adopts the fiscal impact statement provided by the Chief Financial Officer as the fiscal impact statement required by section 602(c)(3) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved December 24, 1973 (87 Stat. 813; D.C. Code § 1-206.02(c)(3)).

Sec. 6. Effective date.

This act shall take effect following approval by the Mayor (or in the event of veto by the Mayor, action by the Council to override the veto), a 30-day period of Congressional review as provided in section 602(c)(1) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved, December

**ENROLLED ORIGINAL**

24, 1973 (87 Stat. 813; D.C. Official Code §1-206.02(c)(1)), and publication in the District of Columbia Register.

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Chairman  
Council of the District of Columbia

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Mayor  
District of Columbia