

BY: Senator PARKER

COMMEMORATING the 160th Anniversary of the
Emancipation Proclamation

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to commemorate significant events which represent turning points in our unique history and which are indelibly etched in the saga of our great Nation; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 160th Anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation; and

WHEREAS, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, as the nation approached its third year of bloody civil war; the proclamation declared "that all persons held as slaves" within the rebellious states "are, and henceforward shall be free."; and

WHEREAS, Despite this expansive wording, the Emancipation Proclamation applied only to states that had seceded from the United States, leaving slavery untouched in the loyal border states; it also expressly exempted parts of the Confederacy that had already come under Northern control; most important, the freedom it promised depended upon Union (United States) military victory; and

WHEREAS, Although the Emancipation Proclamation did not completely end slavery in the nation, it captured the hearts and imagination of millions of Americans and fundamentally transformed the character of the war; and

WHEREAS, After January 1, 1863, every advance of federal troops expanded the domain of freedom; moreover, the Proclamation announced the acceptance of black men into the Union Army and Navy, enabling the liberated to become liberators; by the end of the war, nearly 200,000 black soldiers and sailors had fought for the Union and freedom; and

WHEREAS, From the first days of the Civil War, slaves had acted to secure their own liberty; the Emancipation Proclamation confirmed their insistence that the war for the Union must become a war for freedom; and

WHEREAS, The original of the Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863, is in the National Archives in Washington, DC; with the text covering five pages, the document was originally tied with narrow red and blue ribbons which were attached to the signature page by a wafered impression of the seal of the United States; most of the ribbon remains; parts of the seal are still decipherable, but other parts have worn off; and

WHEREAS, The Emancipation Proclamation added moral force to the Union cause and strengthened the Union both militarily and politically; as a milestone along the road to slavery's final destruction, the

Emancipation Proclamation has assumed a place among the great documents of human freedom; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 160th Anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation.