

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commending the Village of Haverstraw, New York, and the Haverstraw African American Connection upon the occasion of hosting its 1st Annual Juneteenth Celebration on June 18, 2016

WHEREAS, Juneteenth is the oldest-known celebration of the ending of slavery; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to commend the Village of Haverstraw, New York, and the Haverstraw African American Connection, HAAC upon the occasion of hosting its 1st Annual Juneteenth Celebration on Saturday, June 18, 2016; and

WHEREAS, The Village of Haverstraw will recognize this auspicious occasion with a myriad of events including the dedication of the African American Memorial Park, a Live Gospel performance by a marching band, and a concert by Sam Waymon and the Magic Band; and

WHEREAS, The Haverstraw African American Connection (HAAC) diligently works to research, recover, preserve and teach the rich culture and contributions of African Americans with emphasis on the African American people of Haverstraw; and

WHEREAS, This year marks the 151st Anniversary of celebrating Juneteenth which began on June 19, 1865, the date Union soldiers under the command of Major General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas, with the news that the Civil War had ended and that all slaves were free; and

WHEREAS, One of General Granger's first orders was Order No. 3 which was read aloud to the people of Texas and which stated: "The people of Texas are informed that in accordance with a Proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and free laborer"; and

WHEREAS, Many of the newly-freed slaves stayed in their locations to learn about the new employer/employee relationship between themselves and their former masters, while others chose to reach family members in other states, and still others chose to move to the Northern states; and

WHEREAS, Settling into new areas as free men and women brought on new realities and challenges of establishing a heretofore non-existent status for Black people in America; and

WHEREAS, The celebration of Juneteenth allowed freed slaves and their descendants to recount the memories of that great day in 1865 when freedom was proclaimed, and also served as a release from the pressures of settling into new territories; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth has been known by a variety of names, including "Jun-Jun," "Freedom Day," "Emancipation Day" and "Emancipation Celebration," but regardless of what the day is called, it is a day to celebrate freedom; and

WHEREAS, Today, Juneteenth is enjoying a phenomenal growth rate within communities and organizations throughout the country; institutions such as the Smithsonian, the Henry Ford Museum and others have begun sponsoring Juneteenth-centered activities; in recent years, a number of local and national Juneteenth organizations have arisen to take their place alongside older organizations, all with the same mission to promote and cultivate knowledge and appreciation of African American history and culture; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth today celebrates African American freedom and achievement, while encouraging continuous self-development and respect for all cultures; as it takes on a more national, symbolic and even global perspective, the events of 1865 in Texas are not forgotten, for

all of the roots tie back to this fertile soil from which a national day

of pride is growing; and

WHEREAS, The future of Juneteenth looks bright as the number of cities and states creating Juneteenth committees continues to increase; respect and appreciation for all of our differences grow out of exposure and working together; and

WHEREAS, Getting involved and supporting Juneteenth celebrations creates new bonds of friendship and understanding among us; this indeed, brightens our future, and that is the Spirit of Juneteenth; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend the Village of Haverstraw, New York, and the Haverstraw African American Connection upon the occasion of hosting its 1st Annual Juneteenth Celebration on June 18, 2016; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Michael Kohut, Mayor, Village of Haverstraw, and Virginia Norfleet, Chairperson, Haverstraw African American Connection.