

HOUSE BILL NO. 4722

June 08, 2023, Introduced by Reps. Scott, Haadsma, Stone, Farhat, Morgan, Tyrone Carter, O'Neal, Neeley, Brenda Carter, Rheingans, MacDonell, Price, Hill, Coleman, Edwards, Breen, Hoskins and Aiyash and referred to the Committee on Government Operations.

A bill to amend 2005 PA 48, entitled

"An act to designate the third Saturday in June as Juneteenth National Freedom Day; and to designate November 26 of each year as Sojourner Truth Day in the state of Michigan,"

by amending the title and section 1 (MCL 435.361).

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN ENACT:

1 TITLE
2 An act to designate ~~the third Saturday in June as Juneteenth~~
3 ~~National Freedom Day; and to designate November 26 of each year as~~
4 ~~Sojourner Truth Day. in the state of Michigan.~~
5 Sec. 1. ~~(1) The legislature recognizes that slavery existed in~~

1 ~~this country for more than 200 years. Millions of African Americans~~
2 ~~were brought to this country as slaves stacked in the bottom of~~
3 ~~slave ships in a 5- to 12-week journey across the Atlantic Ocean~~
4 ~~known as the "middle passage". Although approximately 11-1/2~~
5 ~~million African Americans survived the voyage across the ocean, the~~
6 ~~number of those who died in the inhuman conditions of the passage~~
7 ~~is probably even higher. Once in this country, the captives were~~
8 ~~subjected to whipping, castration, branding, and rape. The~~
9 ~~legislature further observes that congress passed the thirteenth~~
10 ~~amendment to the United States constitution on January 31, 1865,~~
11 ~~abolishing slavery throughout the United States and its~~
12 ~~territories. In the following months, spontaneous celebrations~~
13 ~~erupted throughout the country whenever African Americans learned~~
14 ~~of their freedom. News of the amendment reached the states at~~
15 ~~different times, and it was not until June 19, 1865 that the~~
16 ~~message of freedom reached the slaves in the western states. In~~
17 ~~honor of this great moment in the history of our nation, the~~
18 ~~legislature declares that the third Saturday in June of each year~~
19 ~~shall be known as "Juneteenth National Freedom Day". The~~
20 ~~legislature encourages individuals, educational institutions, and~~
21 ~~social, community, religious, labor, and business organizations to~~
22 ~~pause on Juneteenth National Freedom Day and reflect upon the~~
23 ~~strong survival instinct of the African-American slaves and the~~
24 ~~excitement and great joy with which African Americans first~~
25 ~~celebrated the abolition of slavery. It is a reminder to all~~
26 ~~Americans of the status and importance of Americans of African~~
27 ~~descent as American citizens.~~

28 ~~(2) The legislature recognizes the fundamental contribution~~
29 ~~Sojourner Truth made to the cause of abolition of slavery, and to~~

1 the establishment of equal rights for women, and to several other
 2 significant social reform and human justice movements in the
 3 nineteenth century. Truth toured the nation for ~~over~~**more than** 40
 4 years as a forceful and passionate advocate for the dispossessed,
 5 using her quick wit and fearless tongue to deliver her message of
 6 equality and justice. She lived in Battle Creek, Michigan, from
 7 1857 until her death on November 26, 1883. Empowered by her
 8 religious faith, the former slave worked tirelessly for many years
 9 to transform national attitudes and institutions. According to Nell
 10 Painter, Princeton professor and Truth biographer, "No other woman
 11 who had ~~gone~~**been** through the ordeal of slavery managed to survive
 12 with sufficient strength, poise, and self-confidence to become a
 13 public presence over the long term". Designating Sojourner Truth
 14 Day in ~~the state of Michigan will~~**this state** not only ~~acknowledge~~
 15 **acknowledges** the importance of this national figure in the
 16 antislavery and human justice movements, but ~~will-it~~ also ~~recognize~~
 17 **recognizes** her strong ties to ~~the~~**this** state during her 26 years of
 18 **Michigan** residence. ~~here.~~In recognition of this great woman, the
 19 legislature declares **that** November 26 of each year ~~to~~**shall** be
 20 known as "Sojourner Truth Day".

21 Enacting section 1. This amendatory act does not take effect
 22 unless Senate Bill No. ____ or House Bill No. 4457 (request no.
 23 02705'23) of the 102nd Legislature is enacted into law.