

Resolutions

RESOLUTION #32

Juneteenth

By Delegates Robert G. Reiter, Jr., Chicago Federation of Labor and Don V. Villar, Chicago Federation of Labor.

WHEREAS, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, 1862, changing the legal status of all enslaved people in Confederate states to free persons as of January 1, 1863; and

WHEREAS, despite the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation, slavery continued in Texas as the state experienced little fighting during the Civil War, and

WHEREAS, on June 19, 1865, two months after the Confederate surrender, Union Army General Gordon Granger, representative of the federal government to Texas, issued “General Order No. 3”, in Gavelston, Texas; and

WHEREAS, General Order No. 3 informed the people of Texas that “all slaves are free” and changed all connections between former masters and slaves to “employer and hired labor;” and

WHEREAS, the anniversary of this order, which notified the enslaved people of Texas of their freedom nearly two-and-a-half years after the Emancipation Proclamation took effect, came to be celebrated annually as “Juneteenth”; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth is a day to remember the struggle of Black/African-Americans in this country, to celebrate Black achievement, and for all Americans to rededicate ourselves to actively eradicating racism and racial bias in all parts of life; and

WHEREAS, though the legal chains that have enslaved and segregated Black Americans have been dissolved, systemic racism still pervades our society today; and

WHEREAS, the labor movement must vigorously combat racism in all its forms, both internally and in our broader society, as we advocate for all working people; and

WHEREAS, the Illinois General Assembly and the Governor of the State of Illinois have the authority to enact legislation declaring official state holidays in Illinois; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Illinois AFL-CIO formally requests the Illinois General Assembly and Gov. JB Pritzker work together to commemorate Juneteenth as an official state holiday in the state of Illinois; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Illinois AFL-CIO, its central labor councils, its affiliates, and all union members in the state of Illinois hereby rededicate themselves to actively and purposefully eradicating racism within our ranks, within our communities, within our state, and within our country.