SENATE RESOLUTION

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By Senators Saldaña and Darneille

WHEREAS, More than two and one-half years after President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, enslaved people — men, women, and children — in Galveston, Texas had not yet received word that the enslaved were now free; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth Independence Day commemorates the day in 1865 when Union soldiers, led by Major General Gordon Granger, arrived in Galveston and issued an order announcing that the Civil War had ended and slaves were free at last; and

WHEREAS, The following year, the freed people of Texas and other Southwestern states celebrated emancipation on June 19th, a tradition that traveled with them as they relocated to new states; and

WHEREAS, Observation of this day began to wane outside of Texas, but was revived, in part, when Coretta Scott King and Reverend Ralph Abernathy held Solidarity Day on June 19, 1968, as part of the Poor People's Campaign, which was organized by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. before his assassination; and

WHEREAS, Now, more than 150 years after the first celebration, Juneteenth is recognized as an official holiday in 45 states, including the state of Washington; and

WHEREAS, The history behind this celebration should never be forgotten; and

WHEREAS, On Juneteenth we honor the resolve, tenacity, and strength of character demonstrated by former slaves who remain an example for all people of all races, religions, genders, and sexual orientations in the United States; and

WHEREAS, This historical day is also a time to recommit ourselves to the work that remains to be done, work that must be done by all of us; and

WHEREAS, Today, we rededicate ourselves to fight for equality and equity for all with an understanding of the past that must inform our future;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State Senate recognize the historical significance of Juneteenth Independence Day and encourage the celebration of this holiday every year.