

# HOUSE BILL No. 4100

January 29, 2003, Introduced by Reps. Hardman, Zelenko, Murphy, Minore, Reeves and McConico and referred to the Committee on Great Lakes and Tourism.

A bill to designate the third Saturday in June as Juneteenth national freedom day.

## THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN ENACT:

1       Sec. 1. (1) The legislature recognizes that slavery existed  
2 in this country for more than 200 years. Millions of  
3 African-Americans were brought to this country as slaves stacked  
4 in the bottom of slave ships in a 5- to 12-week journey across  
5 the Atlantic Ocean known as the "middle passage". Although  
6 approximately 11-1/2 million African-Americans survived the  
7 voyage across the ocean, the number of those who died in the  
8 inhuman conditions of the passage is probably even higher. Once  
9 in this country, the captives were subjected to whipping,  
10 castration, branding, and rape.

11       (2) The legislature further observes that congress passed  
12 the thirteenth amendment to the United States constitution on

1 January 31, 1865, abolishing slavery throughout the United States  
2 and its territories. In the following months, spontaneous  
3 celebrations erupted throughout the country whenever  
4 African-Americans learned of their freedom. News of the  
5 amendment reached the states at different times, and it was not  
6 until June 19, 1865 that the message of freedom reached the  
7 slaves in the western states. In honor of this great moment in  
8 the history of our nation, the legislature declares that the  
9 third Saturday in June of each year shall be known as Juneteenth  
10 national freedom day.

11 (3) The legislature encourages individuals, educational  
12 institutions, and social, community, religious, labor, and  
13 business organizations to pause on Juneteenth national freedom  
14 day and reflect upon the strong survival instinct of the  
15 African-American slaves and the excitement and great joy with  
16 which African-Americans first celebrated the abolition of  
17 slavery. It is a reminder to all Americans of the status and  
18 importance of Americans of African descent as American citizens.