**As Introduced**

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| **126th General Assembly** |
| **Regular Session** |
| **2005-2006** |

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| **H. B. No. 393** |

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**Representatives Patton, S., Evans, C., Schlichter, Cassell, McGregor, J., Allen, Gilb, Yuko, Combs, Beatty, Hartnett, Key, Woodard, Widowfield, Redfern, Ujvagi, Driehaus, Miller, DeBose, Flowers, Distel, Carano, Hughes, Reidelbach, Trakas, Law, Hood, Smith, S., Harwood, Strahorn, Wolpert, Boccieri, Oelslager, Willamowski, Skindell, Book, Brown, Otterman**

**A BILL**

**To enact section 5.2231 of the Revised Code to designate September 22 as "Emancipation Day."**

 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:**

**Section 1. That section 5.2231 of the Revised Code be enacted to read as follows:**

**Sec. 5.2231. The twenty-second day of September shall be designated as "Emancipation Day," in honor of the anniversary of the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation by President Abraham Lincoln on September 22, 1862.**

**State Representative Sylvester Patton**

Sponsor Testimony for H.B. 393

Before

**The House State Government Committee**

**Tuesday, November 1, 2005**

          Good Afternoon Chairman Buehrer, Ranking Member Stewart and Members of the House State Government Committee.  I would like to thank you for allowing me to give testimony for HB 393, “Designating September 22nd of every year as Emancipation Day in Ohio.”

          HB 393’s intent is to memorialize a day in which a fundamental change in race relations took place in the United States of America.  It is the day that African Americans celebrated the anniversary of their liberation.

          President Abraham Lincoln, on the 22nd day of September in 1862, issued a preliminary proclamation that gave slaveholding states 100 days to abandon slavery.  On January 1, 1863 the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect.  It is presumed that many people far and wide began their celebration long before this effective date, while others in isolated areas had no indication of their freedom. Some Texan slaves, particularly in the Galveston area, did not receive notification about this important declaration until two years, six months, and 19 days after its issuance. Therefore they have customarily observed the date of their notification- June 19, 1865. This memorial is often referred to as “Juneteenth”.

          Despite the fact that Ohio was a free state, prior to the announcement Ohioans have felt it important to celebrate the declaration that liberated slaves everywhere. Ohio has a tradition of observing September 22nd- the initial date that the proclamation was issued.  History bears witness to the celebration of this day in many cities across Ohio.  Gallipolis of Galia County Ohio has celebrated the Emancipation Proclamation since 1863.  It is reported to be the area with the longest, continuously running commemoration. Rendville of Perry County Ohio has also kept with local tradition in memorializing this significant event. Attached to your sponsor testimony is a photograph of one of the earliest Emancipation Celebrations in Rendville, Ohio.

          Several months ago Mr. Paul LaRue and his Research History Class at Washington Senior High School in Washington Courthouse, Ohio contacted me with their desire to initiate this significant legislation.  We believe that this legislation is merely the beginning of a statewide educational and historical campaign. We envision students going into the community to educate all Ohioans about the impact that the Emancipation Proclamation has had on not only African Americans but people of all ethnicities. I have been diligently working with Mr. LaRue and his students to make this dream a reality. Mr. LaRue’s students are also responsible for the initiation and passing on House Concurrent Resolution 8 from the 125th General Assembly. This decree recognized the service of the Black Brigade in the defense of Cincinnati in 1862.

          Today, many holidays have been so commercialized that young people (and many adults) are not even aware of their true meaning and value. Christmas is not about Santa Claus; Easter is not about bunnies and eggs; and “Juneteenth” or the Emancipation Celebration is not a meaningless party. We must take on the responsibility to inform the masses about the directive in which enslaved people were declared free.

           I ask that you join me in memorializing the presidential promise of the Emancipation Proclamation in the Great State of Ohio every year on September 22nd.I respectfully ask for your favorable vote for HB 393.  Thank you.

Proponent Testimony

**The House State Government Committee**

Proponent Testimony submitted by:

Andy Sheridan, Mr. Paul LaRue’s Research History Class

**March 1, 2006**

Good Afternoon Chairman Buehrer, Ranking Member Stewart and Members of the House State Government Committee.  My name is Andy Sheridan and I am a member of Mr. Paul LaRue’s Research History Class at Washington Senior High School in Washington Court House.  I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify this day on House Bill 393, which designates September 22nd of every year as Emancipation Day in Ohio.

**Research on Emancipation Day**

My classmate, McKenzie, and I visited the State Library to research Emancipation Day.  I reviewed several books of legislative documents, such as the House and Senate Journals, and other legislative data and records.  We found that between the years of 1860-1880, there were no laws on the matter of Emancipation Day.

Representative Patton’s office requested that the Legislative Services Committee do research as well.  The reason for this research was to look for any historical data pertaining to Emancipation Day.

I found this research project to be very informative and enlightening. I am eager to begin spreading the knowledge that I have attained on this matter.

I stand in full support House Bill 393. Thank you for your time.

**The House State Government Committee**

Testimony submitted by:

McKenzie Pfeifer, Mr. Paul LaRue’s Research History Class

**March 1, 2006**

Chairman Buehrer, Ranking Member Stewart and Members of the House State Government Committee, I would like to thank you for allowing me to speak on behalf of H.B 393.  My name is McKenzie Pfeifer and I am a member of Mr. Paul LaRue’s Research History class.

**Importance of September 22nd**

President Lincoln knew that decisions needed to be made concerning the emancipation of slaves.  He was pressured by politicians and a large delegation representing various churches to make a statement on slavery.  On September 22, 1862, Lincoln read his Emancipation Proclamation to his cabinet and it was approved.

Lincoln’s proclamation emphasized the war’s continuation until the union was restored.  He also announced that any slave still being held on the first of the year (January 1, 1863) would have to be set free.  This statement in turn opened the door for African Americans into military service.

Due to the effects of Lincoln’s decision for Emancipation, I feel that we should acknowledge this by celebrating Emancipation Day on one of the days that emancipation was put into action.  I support House Bill 393 designating September 22 as Ohio’s Emancipation Day.

**The House State Government Committee**

Testimony submitted by:

Camille Galecki, Paul LaRue’s Research History Class

**March 1, 2006**

Good Afternoon, Chairman Buehrer, Ranking Member Stewart and Members of the House State Government Committee.  My name is Camille Galecki, and I am in Paul LaRue’s Research History Class.  Thank you for the opportunity to testify today about Emancipation Day.

**EMANCIPATION DAY**

There are many different celebrations in the United States for Emancipation Day.  Washington D.C. has a designated day.  Richmond, Virginia also has a set date.  Traditionally, Ohio celebrates Emancipation Day on September 22, which is the day Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation in 1862.  The Emancipation Proclamation went into effect on January 1, 1863.

Gallipolis and Rendville are the only remaining cities in Ohio to continue celebrating Emancipation Day.  Gallipolis has been holding celebrations for over 130 years.  Most towns in Ohio can probably find evidence of hosting festivities around September 22.  This information can be encountered in old town newspapers.

**JUNETEENTH**

Juneteenth is the most widely celebrated holiday honoring Emancipation Day.  In the United States, there are 30 states and over 150 cities that participate in Juneteenth celebrations.  In Texas and Oklahoma, Juneteenth is a legal holiday.  Juneteenth is usually celebrated on June 19.  However, the date can vary.  Arizona decided the temperature is too hot to celebrate Juneteenth in the summer.  Therefore, they hold festivities for it in February.

Many people that celebrate Juneteenth do not know the history behind the holiday.  They do not know exactly what they are commemorating.  Allow me to explain the history behind Juneteenth.

On June 19, 1865, Union troops under the command of Major General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas to find some people still enslaved.  The Major General read the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing the slaves.  These people were known as the last slaves to be freed.

Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation had been in effect since January 1, 1863.  Two and a half years later, slavery still existed in Galveston.  Some believe the slaves knew about the Proclamation, and the town simply lacked the Union troops to enforce the law.  Others believe the slaves were oblivious to such news until General Granger told them.  Those who believe the latter have theories as to why slaves did not know about the Proclamation.  One theory believes the messenger delivering the news was killed on his way to Texas.  Another theory states the slave owners were fully aware of the Proclamation and kept the information from the slaves, ensuring the slaves would continue to work.  A different theory describes the Union troops deliberately keeping such information quiet to allow the slave owners one more cotton harvest.

**HOUSE BILL 393**

I have more information on Juneteenth and other Emancipation Day celebrations at the website I created.  The web address is http://www.washingtonch.k12.oh.us  Click on the link titled “Emancipation Day.”

If Texas and Oklahoma made Juneteenth a legal holiday, Ohio should be willing to legalize a state holiday recognizing emancipation.  But let’s follow our own tradition.  Let’s use the tradition that has been ongoing for 130 years.  Perhaps we can start a trend through the nation and convince every state to celebrate such an important event in history.  That is why House Bill 393 designating September 22 as Ohio’s Emancipation Day should be passed.

Ohio is not against Juneteenth.  However, Juneteenth is not the same thing as Emancipation Day celebrated on September 22.  Juneteenth is not particular to Ohio, but Emancipation Day is.  Let’s embrace Ohio’s own unique traditions and histories.

**The House State Government Committee**

Proponent Testimony submitted by:

Darci Mossbarger, Mr. Paul LaRue's Research History Class

**March 1, 2006**

Good Afternoon Chairman Buehrer, Ranking Member Stewart and Members of the House State Government Committee.  My name is Darci Mossbarger and I am a student in Mr. Paul LaRue's Research History Class.  Thank you for allowing me to give testimony on the history of Emancipation Day in Ohio.

Few cities in Ohio celebrate Emancipation Day and it is our goal to make Emancipation Day a unified, statewide holiday.  The cities that celebrate Emancipation Day have a long history of doing so.  By creating a statewide Emancipation Day a wonderful time in history would be preserved and the tradition would be made available to more Ohio citizens.

**Emancipation Day Celebrations**

Gallipolis, in Gallia County, has celebrated Emancipation Day since September 22, 1863.  The city recently celebrated Emancipation Day on September 24th and 25th in 2005.  This celebration is the oldest, continuous Emancipation Day festivity in the state of Ohio and the nation.  Gallipolis has only missed one celebration, in 1887, due to difficult times.  In the 1863

Supplemental Ohio Census Gallia County had 366 African American males over the age of 21, which accounted for eight percent of the total male population of the county.  This was the highest percentage in Ohio at the time.  Many of these men entered Military service in the Civil

War.

Rendville, in Perry County, also continues to celebrate Emancipation Day.  Rendville has celebrated Emancipation Day since the town was formed in the 1880's as a mining (coal) town.

They celebrated this important day, in 2005, on September 24th.  In 1890 Rendville had an approximate population of 850 compared to the approximately 50 people currently residing in

Rendville.  One of the reasons the town began celebrating Emancipation Day was due to the large number of African American Civil War Veterans who settled in Rendville.  The first

African American mayor elected in the state of Ohio is said to be Dr. I. S. Tuppins, mayor of

Rendville.

Washington Court House, in Fayette County, celebrated Emancipation Day on September 22nd.

As a precursor to the celebrations to come George W. Williams, as a Republican delegate, spoke on September 19, 1878 on the steps of the courthouse.  The Emancipation Day celebrations first appeared during the mid 1880's and seem to have ended in the early 1890's.  The day's celebrations were first held in a grove outside of town, but eventually moved to the fairgrounds.

The festivities became larger as the years went by and included speeches from politicians, brass bands, and parades.  Excursion trains brought people from Circleville, Chillicothe, and Xenia to participate in the celebration.  The Emancipation Day speakers spoke of slavery, African American soldiers, and Abraham Lincoln during their speeches.

The celebrations for Emancipation Day have decreased drastically in size over the intervening years since the Civil War ended.  It is our hope that by creating a day specifically to celebrate

Emancipation Day we are not only recognizing the efforts of those still celebrating in Gallipolis and Rendville, but encouraging everyone in Ohio to learn about this important day in history.  A statewide Emancipation Day would be a way to celebrate the freedom gained by so many

Americans.  This would bring about an opportunity to learn about freedom, the importance of

President Lincoln, and what Emancipation means.  We ask for your support to pass H.B. 393 to commemorate Ohio's Emancipation Day every year on September 22nd.

**Floor Speech for HB 393**

**Wednesday, May 10, 2006**

          Speaker Husted and members of this Assembly, I am pleased to introduce House Bill 393. This bill will designate September 22nd of every year as Emancipation Day in Ohio.

                   HB 393’s intent is to memorialize a day in which a fundamental change in race relations took place in the United States of America.  It is the day that Americans celebrated the first step towards the liberation of slaves.

          President Abraham Lincoln, on the 22nd day of September in 1862, issued a preliminary proclamation that gave slaveholding states 100 days to abandon slavery. Historically, Ohio has celebrated Emancipation Day, statewide, since the 1860s. It has been primarily celebrated in Gallipolis, Ohio (Galia County) and Rendville, Ohio (Perry County). However, Gallipolis has the longest running Emancipation Day celebration in the country- of which Rep. Clyde Evans actively participates.

          Several months ago Mr. Paul LaRue and his Research History Class at Washington Senior High School in Washington Courthouse, Ohio contacted me with their desire to initiate this significant legislation.           I was recently informed that Mr. LaRue’s class has received national recognition for their dedication and hard work on this project. They have been selected as a winner in the *Save Our History* National Honors Contest sponsored by the History Channel. A $1,000 cash prize was presented to their classroom.

          Mr. LaRue’s students are also responsible for the initiation and passing on House Concurrent Resolution 8 from the 125th General Assembly. This decree recognized the service of the Black Brigade in the defense of Cincinnati in 1862.

          Today, many holidays have been so commercialized that young people (and many adults) are not even aware of their true meaning and value. Christmas is not about Santa Claus; Easter is not about bunnies and eggs; and the Emancipation Celebration is not a meaningless party. We must take on the responsibility to inform the masses about the directive in which enslaved people were declared free.

          I would like to thank Speaker Husted and Chairman Buehrer for allowing this legislation to be brought to the floor today.

          I ask that you join me in memorializing the presidential promise of the Emancipation Proclamation in the Great State of Ohio every year on September 22nd. I respectfully ask for your favorable vote for HB 393.

 The House of Representatives voted on the bill.  It passed unanimously; 90-0.

126TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF THE

STATE OF OHIO

**SENATE CALENDAR**

Wednesday— May 24, 2006 — 1:30 PM

**Reports of Conference Committee**

**Am. H. B. No. 393 — Representatives Patton, S., Evans, C., Schlichter, Cassell, McGregor, J., Allen, Gilb, Yuko, Combs, Beatty, Hartnett, Key, Woodard, Widowfield, Redfern, Ujvagi, Driehaus, Miller, DeBose, Flowers, Distel, Carano, Hughes, Reidelbach, Trakas, Law, Hood, Smith, S., Harwood, Strahorn, Wolpert, Boccieri, Oelslager, Willamowski, Skindell, Book, Brown, Otterman, Stewart, D., Sykes, Mitchell, Barrett, Buehrer, Chandler, Coley, Daniels, DeGeeter, Domenick, Faber, Fende, Garrison, Healy, Hoops, Kilbane, Latta, Mason, McGregor, R., Patton, T., Perry, Peterson, Raga, Raussen, Sayre, Schaffer, Schneider, Seaver, Smith, G., Stewart, J., Taylor, Wagoner, White, Williams, Yates Senators Cates, Grendell, Armbruster, Mumper, Niehaus, Schuring, Miller, D., Fedor, Kearney**

To enact section 5.2234 of the Revised Code to designate September 22 as "Emancipation Day."

(Committee on State and Local Government and Veterans Affairs recommends passage May 23, 2006)

The Ohio Senate approved the legislation; 30-0 in favor of the bill.

**(126th General Assembly)**

**(Amended House Bill Number 393)**

**AN ACT**

**To enact section 5.2234 of the Revised Code to designate September 22 as "Emancipation Day."**

***Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Ohio:***

**SECTION 1.**That section 5.2234 of the Revised Code be enacted to read as follows:

**Sec. 5.2234.**The twenty-second day of September shall be designated as "Emancipation Day," in honor of the anniversary of the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation by President Abraham Lincoln on September 22, 1862.

Governor Taft signed the legislation  on June 28, 2006.