

Legislative Analysis



JUNETEENTH NATIONAL FREEDOM DAY AND SOJOURNER TRUTH DAY

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Senate Bill 384 as passed by the Senate
Sponsor: Sen. Martha Scott
House Committee: Government Operations
Senate Committee: Local, Urban and State Affairs

Complete to 6-6-05

A SUMMARY OF SENATE BILL 384 AS PASSED BY THE SENATE 5-31-05

The bill would create a new act to designate the third Saturday in June of each year as "Juneteenth National Freedom Day" and November 26 of each year as "Sojourner Truth Day."

Juneteenth. The third Saturday in June of each year would be declared "Juneteenth National Freedom Day" to encourage individuals, educational institutions, and social, community, religious, labor, and business organizations to pause on that day and reflect upon the strong survival instinct of the African-American slaves and the excitement and great joy with which African-Americans first celebrated the abolition of slavery. The day would serve as a reminder to all Americans of the status and importance of Americans of African descent as American citizens. The bill notes that Juneteenth is celebrated in honor of the date in 1865 when "the message of freedom reached the slaves in the western states."

Sojourner Truth. Additionally, the bill would designate November 26 of each year as "Sojourner Truth Day" to recognize the fundamental contribution she made to the cause of the abolition of slavery and the establishment of equal rights for women and to several other significant social reform and human justice movements in the 19th Century. Sojourner Truth lived in Battle Creek from 1857 until her death on November 26, 1883.

The bill states: "Truth toured the nation for over 40 years as a forceful and passionate advocate for the dispossessed, using her quick wit and fearless tongue to deliver her message of equality and justice. . . . Empowered by her religious faith, the former slave worked tirelessly for many years to transform national attitudes and institutions."

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill would have no fiscal impact on the state or local governmental units.

Legislative Analyst: Mark Wolf

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