

# Proclamation



*Jane Castor, Mayor*

**WHEREAS**, Juneteenth, also known as **Juneteenth Independence Day**, represents a very important milestone in American history, when our nation fulfilled its creed of being “the land of the free” and during the American Civil War, the Honorable Abraham Lincoln, 16<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, issued the **Emancipation Proclamation** on September 22, 1862, which afforded free status under federal law to millions of enslaved African Americans; and

**WHEREAS**, the Emancipation Proclamation had an effective date of January 1, 1863, but it was more than two years later, on June 19, 1865, that General Gordon Grainger read *General Order Number 3* in Galveston, Texas, announcing freedom to the last of the enslaved Americans who had yet to be told; and

**WHEREAS**, this event has come to be known as **Juneteenth**, which is a portmanteau of *June* and *nineteenth*, and it is not just an African American celebration, but a very significant event in the United States of America’s history, signaling the last day of American slavery, and for that reason it is recognized and treasured by freedom-loving people throughout the nation; and

**WHEREAS**, Juneteenth celebrates African American freedom and achievements, and it encourages continuous self-development and respect for all cultures, and it is rich with symbolism including the Juneteenth Flag with its star representing a new freedom, and the colors of red, white, and blue signifying the history of African American slaves and their descendants, and that they were all Americans; and

**WHEREAS**, the Honorable Joseph Robinette Biden, Junior, 46<sup>th</sup> President of the United States of America, on June 17, 2021, signed Senate Bill 475 designating Juneteenth National Independence Day as a legal public holiday, and organizations in communities across the nation commemorate Juneteenth Independence Day with events to bring awareness to all citizens regarding the meaningfulness Juneteenth holds in our country’s history, and the lessons it bestows on its people; and

**WHEREAS**, celebrating its 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, **ROC THE BLOCK, INC.** is a nonprofit organization established by Ms. Bolaji Ajike, and its mission is *Reconditioning Our Communities* through cultural celebration, historical education, and active community engagement, and it organizes dynamic events and festivals for the entire Tampa Bay area including the annual Juneteenth Independence Day Festival; and

**WHEREAS**, this year, the **5<sup>th</sup> Annual Juneteenth Independence Day Festival** is held June 16-23, 2025, at Raymond James Stadium, Tampa River Center, TopGolf Tampa, and other locations with experiences for everyone including summits, conferences, youth activities, health and art experiences, live music from local and national artists, food, vendors, a 5K run/walk, fireworks, and much more, and the festival brings the community together in celebration and awareness regarding Juneteenth.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Jane Castor, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the city of Tampa, Florida do hereby proclaim Thursday, June 19, 2025, as

## “JUNETEENTH INDEPENDENCE DAY”

in the city of Tampa, Florida and urge all residents to recognize the importance this event played in our nation’s history, to participate in the Juneteenth Independence Day celebrations, and thank the ROC THE BLOCK organization for their dedication in ensuring cultural awareness and the celebration of Juneteenth is brought to the Tampa community.

Dated in Tampa, Florida, this 30<sup>th</sup> day of May 2025.



*Jane Castor*  
Mayor