

## Hoyer Statement Recognizing Juneteenth

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) issued the following statement recognizing Juneteenth, the oldest, nationally-celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States:

“On this day in 1865, slaves were finally freed in the State of Texas - two and a half years after the Emancipation Proclamation officially abolished slavery. It was a significant moment in our nation’s history that marked the spread of emancipation across the union. Since then, Juneteenth has been observed as the celebration of emancipation and the expansion of freedoms to African Americans following centuries of oppression and suffering.

“Juneteenth is also a day of reflection to recall the African American experience and pay respects to the great suffering endured during slavery and its aftermath. It is a time to appreciate the struggle for freedom, and to acknowledge a period in our history that shaped and continues to influence our society today.

“On this day, I am reminded of the words of abolitionist and writer Frederick Douglass, a native Marylander, who dedicated his life to ending slavery and advocating for the equality of all people, ‘The whole history of progress of human liberty shows that all concessions yet made to her august claims have been born of earnest struggle. If there is no struggle there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom, and deprecate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground, they want rain without thunder and lightning.’

“Douglass also said, ‘I would unite with anybody to do right and with nobody to do wrong.’ It was in this spirit that he endeavored to set right the wrongs of a broken nation and enlisted others in the fight for freedom. On this Juneteenth, we pay tribute to those efforts and rededicate ourselves to the still necessary pursuit of greater equality for all citizens.”

###