



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF COOK COUNTY

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**TONI PRECKWINKLE**  
PRESIDENT

May 3, 2021

Dennis Deer  
Commissioner-2<sup>nd</sup> District  
Cook County Board of Commissioners

Dear Commissioner Deer:

We recognize the historical significance of this day in 1865 in Galveston, Texas when Union Major General Gordon Granger declared General Order No. 3 in effect which called for the freeing of all slaves. It was more than two years after President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, but it finally would erase what remained of slavery in this country for good.

There is still much more work to be done to reconcile the racist history of our past that cannot be fixed by one holiday. The history of racism stemming from slavery created a long, deep path to current disparities in education, jobs, housing, and healthcare, as well as disproportionate incarceration rates.

I support and believe that celebrations such as Juneteenth make it clear that black lives matter and they can and should be celebrated for the part they play in the history and fabric of our country.

Given where we are in this country today, Juneteenth is stronger than ever before, as it has been fueled by the unfortunate, but extremely impactful deaths of African Americans.

Now that Cook County has declared June 19<sup>th</sup> each year as a Cook County Holiday, we will partner with organizations and communities to celebrate the contributions of the many African Americans from the past and today whose families were liberated, thereby allowing them to be free today.

Sincerely,

  
Toni Preckwinkle  
President of the Cook County Board of Commissioners