



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF COOK COUNTY**

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**TONI PRECKWINKLE**  
PRESIDENT

June 6, 2023  
Barbara Deer  
Executive Director  
Juneteenth Illinois NFP

Dear Barbara:

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.

After Cook County declared June 19th as a Cook County Holiday, we have continued to 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