



**MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE
ASSEMBLY MEMORANDUM**

No. AM 72-2023

Meeting Date: February 7, 2023

1 **From: Assembly Members Quinn-Davidson, Rivera & Zaletel**

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3 **Subject: AO 2023-17 - AN ORDINANCE OF THE ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL**
4 **ASSEMBLY AMENDING ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL CODE SECTION 3.30.141**
5 **TO INCLUDE JUNETEENTH AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY, BUT NOT**
6 **SEWARD'S DAY, AS PAID MUNICIPAL HOLIDAYS, AND CHANGING**
7 **WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY TO PRESIDENTS' DAY, REQUESTING THE SAME**
8 **TO BE RECOGNIZED HOLIDAYS IN LABOR AGREEMENTS, AND WAIVING**
9 **PERSONNEL RULES COMMITTEE REVIEW.**

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12 The month of February is an important time to collectively celebrate
13 the contributions, achievements and history of Black people in our community,
14 whose impact has been historically overlooked and undervalued. The same is true
15 of our Indigenous community and their impacts and stewardship of the land and
16 culture of Alaska. For those reasons, and others, this ordinance is timely.

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18 This ordinance makes important changes to recognized holidays for municipal
19 employees in Anchorage Municipal Code (AMC) Section 3.30.141. While removing
20 one holiday (Seward's Day), this measure will add two culturally significant days to
21 the roster: Juneteenth and Indigenous Peoples' Day. It also changes the day
22 previously observed as Washington's Birthday to Presidents' Day.

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24 **Washington's Birthday to Presidents' Day**

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26 The change in name of the recognized holiday from Washington's Birthday to
27 Presidents' Day follows a popular trend throughout the country. While the federal
28 holiday remains Washington's Birthday, many states and localities moved the
29 holiday to the third Monday in February, calling it Presidents' Day (some called it
30 Washington & Lincoln's Birthday). The State of Alaska observes Presidents' Day.
31 This ordinance would adopt Presidents' Day in lieu of Washington's Birthday.

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33 **Seward's Day**

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35 Most communities that list Seward's Day as a paid holiday do not have widely
36 celebrated events surrounding the holiday, nor is this day tied to a particular cultural
37 group of residents. Further, Seward's Day has a mixed history in the Municipality of
38 Anchorage. It was first added as a holiday in 1979, then removed in 1999 to allow
39 for the addition of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and later added back as an additional
40 paid holiday in 2014. Given this on-again-off-again history, the lack of celebratory
41 significance of this holiday to the community, and in order to balance the two new
42 holidays added by this ordinance, netting only one new paid holiday, the sponsors
43 chose Seward's Day as the most reasonable for removal.

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Juneteenth

Juneteenth has become widely observed throughout the United States in recent years – first becoming an official state holiday in Texas in 1980, with three states following by 2000. Over the next two decades, Juneteenth has become officially recognized or observed in all but one state. Finally, in 2021 it became the first new federal holiday since Martin Luther King, Jr. Day was adopted in 1983.

Although Juneteenth commemorates an event in Galveston, Texas, the significance of the Emancipation Proclamation finally reaching the last of the states and its enslaved people resonates with all Americans. -It is often simply described as the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States. Adding this holiday to the paid municipal holidays is a natural step in the progression of the Municipality’s ongoing recognition of African Americans in Anchorage and Alaska, whose contributions have been greater than their numbers.

Juneteenth has come to be a large celebration in Anchorage with a “Juneteenth Citywide Celebration” on the Delaney Park Strip each year, featuring performers, vendors, and more, bringing together community through education, unity and advocacy and sponsored by nonprofit group Juneteenth Anchorage. The Municipality of Anchorage first sponsored this event in 1998. The Assembly has recognized Juneteenth Day by resolution every year since 2012. Ensuring Municipal employees’ ability to participate in this holiday and related activities is an important reason for adding it to the list of paid holidays in AMC 3.30.141. Federal employees receive Juneteenth as a paid holiday; adding it as a Municipal holiday would provide more consistency for residents.

The sponsors and recent Assemblies have honored the legacy of Anchorage’s African American community, and this measure is a natural step in those efforts.

Indigenous Peoples’ Day

In 2015, both Governor Bill Walker and Mayor Ethan Berkowitz issued proclamations in conjunction with the Native Peoples Institute Elders and Youth Conference recognizing Indigenous Peoples’ Day, but neither of these measures were permanent, nor did they establish an official holiday.

This ordinance would add Indigenous Peoples’ Day to the list of paid municipal holidays. The Municipality has been working towards regular and meaningful recognition of the impact of Indigenous peoples – particularly Alaska Natives – on our community and state. The land acknowledgement read at every Assembly meeting, the government-to-government relationship with the Native Village of Eklutna (NVE), and a growing emphasis on honoring the official naming policy, requiring that Indigenous place names be given priority, all are valuable indications of the Municipality’s commitment to recognition of Indigenous Peoples. Observance of Indigenous Peoples’ Day as a paid municipal holiday is fitting.

Commitment to BIPOC Communities

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2 Significant investments have been made in the African American and BIPOC (Black,
3 Indigenous and People of Color) communities of Anchorage in the past few years.
4 Most recently, CARES and ARPA funds (Federal COVID recovery measures) were
5 carefully invested in projects committed to making improvements in BIPOC
6 communities from the following organizations:

- 7 • Alaska Black Caucus
- 8 • Alaska Village Initiatives
- 9 • Cook Inlet Housing Authority
- 10 • Enlaces
- 11 • Mountain View Health Services
- 12 • Pacific Community of Alaska
- 13 • Partners for Progress, Inc.
- 14 • Polynesian Association of Alaska
- 15 • Shiloh Community Housing
- 16 • Umoja Coworking and Incubator

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18 The Assembly meets on a quarterly basis with the Alaska Black Caucus for a
19 roundtable discussion. Also quarterly, the Assembly participates in meetings with
20 the Native Village of Eklutna Tribal Council as part of the government-to-government
21 relationship. The Assembly regularly consults with the NVE President on matters
22 affecting the Tribe, such as the Eklutna Hydroelectric Project and its impact on the
23 efforts related to restoration of the Eklutna River.

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25 Recognition of Juneteenth and Indigenous Peoples' Day as paid municipal holidays
26 would further communicate the Municipality of Anchorage's commitment to its
27 providing culturally relevant holidays for its employees and their community.

28 29 **Effect of Ordinance**

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31 Countless studies show direct correlation between time off and greater productivity
32 of workers. Work-life balance is imperative for worker retention, and the Municipality
33 is recently struggling to retain employees in every department. This ordinance seeks
34 to provide more time for employees to spend recharging, to provide the ability to
35 observe meaningful holidays and to potentially increase productivity through a more
36 productive, happier workforce. Any cost of additional time off could be recovered not
37 only through greater productivity, but multiple times over through worker retention
38 and the savings gained through reduced hiring and training costs.

39 40 **Waiving Review by the Personnel Rules Committee**

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42 The ordinance has not been reviewed by the Personnel Rules Committee (PRC).
43 The committee has been functionally unable to provide feedback on personnel
44 matters, as the board that approves PRC membership, the Human Resources
45 Advisory Board, has only one member and is unable to achieve a quorum. The
46 ordinance waives that requirement.

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48 We ask for your support of this ordinance.

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