



June 3, 2014

Ald. Milele A. Coggs  
(414) 286-2994

## **Juneteenth approved as optional holiday for city workers**

Today the Common Council overwhelmingly approved “**Juneteenth Day**” as an optional holiday for city employees. The annual holiday falls on June 19 and marks the date that the last enslaved people of African descent received word of the Emancipation Proclamation.

**Alderwoman Milele A. Coggs** authored the legislation, which was co-sponsored by 11 Council colleagues. “Juneteenth Day is a time of reflection on history, remembrance of culture, and celebration of family and community. It is important that we allow city workers the option of a paid holiday (using vacation) for Juneteenth,” Alderwoman Coggs said.

City employees may now take the optional paid holiday by using vacation time on another paid holiday in the same calendar year. Juneteenth Day does not change the total number of annual paid holidays, and if it falls on a work day, departments will remain open and workers will not receive holiday premium pay.

Although President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on Jan. 1, 1863, Juneteenth Day recognizes the date Major General Gordon Granger and his regiment of Union soldiers landed at Galveston, Texas, and freed the enslaved Africans there in 1865.

The Common Council passed similar legislation in March 2014 recognizing March 31 as “Cesar E. Chavez Day,” an optional holiday to honor the birthday of Cesar Chavez, a champion of civil rights, labor rights, voting rights, and women’s rights.

A replay telecast of today’s Common Council meeting will be available at [milwaukee.gov/Channel25](http://milwaukee.gov/Channel25).