

WisDems: Statement on Juneteenth

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Madison, Wis. — Today, Democratic Party of Wisconsin Chair Ben Wikler and Vice Chair Felesia Martin issued the following statement in commemoration of Juneteenth National Independence Day.

“This year, we celebrate Juneteenth as a federal holiday for the first time, more than 155 years after celebrations first began,” said Democratic Party of Wisconsin Chair Ben Wikler. “As we emerge from this pandemic and gather to celebrate Juneteenth together once again, we must also recognize the unfinished work of equity and justice in America. The two year delay in news of President Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation reaching the enslaved people of Galveston, Texas is reflective of a long history too often marked by halted progress and unmet promises. This Juneteenth must be a moment we turn with urgency to address the inequities in education, health care, transportation, economic opportunity, policing, and our justice system that have gone too long unaddressed. As we celebrate, let us draw strength and inspiration from the generations of activists who have fought against overwhelming odds for equal liberty and justice for Black Americans—and, at last successfully, for the official recognition of this holiday itself.”

“Among the many milestones we celebrate today, this year’s Juneteenth also marks the 50th anniversary of Milwaukee’s first celebration of this holiday,” said Democratic Party of Wisconsin Vice Chair Felesia Martin. “Today is a day of celebration for our community, but also an opportunity to welcome others across the state to join in this celebration for the first time. Juneteenth is a time of reflection, a time of recognition of the struggle, resilience and triumphs of Black Americans, and a time to recommit ourselves to the just and equitable America we wish for all our children.”

Chair Wikler and Vice Chair Martin will also join in Juneteenth celebrations today at the annual Northcott Neighborhood House Juneteenth Day Celebration in

Milwaukee.