Common Sense

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Happy Juneteenth!

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Slavery has been called America's "original sin."

Folks do not generally like to dwell on their sins. That is why we all think forgiveness is so swell.

But the first and most important step in redemption? To stop committing the wickedness, in this case to immediately emancipate those held in bondage. That "struggle," as the escaped slave and abolitionist Frederick Douglass would so eloquently refer to it, was anything but quick.

Emancipation came only after Union forces won the Civil War, America's bloodiest conflict by far.

> **Is there anything more worthy of commemoration than freeing people from slavery?**

But it did come. Slavery was abolished.

And this wonderful news reached Galveston, Texas, on June 19, 1865 — a date that has lived on as the holiday "Juneteenth." (Some call it "Emancipation Day" or "Freedom Day.") And enslaved people were freed.

"This year, Juneteenth, a holiday that celebrates the arrival of the news of emancipation from slavery," Veronica Chambers writes in the *New York Times*, "seems to be a bigger deal across the nation."

By executive order, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo has declared today a paid holiday for state employees. Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam, of blackface infamy, gave all state executive branch employees the day off and promised to push through legislation next year naming Juneteenth a state holiday to be "acknowledged and celebrated by all of us."

U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee says she will introduce a bill to make Juneteenth a national holiday.

I like it. Is there anything more worthy of commemoration than freeing people from slavery? It cannot hurt to remind people there was once slavery in America, or that we fought and died to bring that awful institution to an end.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.