

Emancipation Day Act

CHAPTER 5 OF THE ACTS OF 2021



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An Act to Recognize Emancipation Day

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WHEREAS on August 1, 1834, the British Parliament abolished slavery in the British Empire through the *Slavery Abolition Act*, freeing approximately 800,000 enslaved Africans throughout the British colonies, including Upper and Lower Canada;

AND WHEREAS Nova Scotia is known to be the birthplace of African presence in Canada, dating back to the early 1600's, and as having the largest historic Black population in Canada;

AND WHEREAS there are 52 historic Black communities in Nova Scotia, and African Nova Scotians are a vibrant part of Nova Scotia's past and have made and continue to make valuable contributions to the fabric and success of Nova Scotia;

AND WHEREAS on December 23, 2013, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the years 2015 to 2024 as the International Decade for People of African Descent;

AND WHEREAS on January 30, 2018, the Government of Canada acknowledged the International Decade for People of African Descent, and on May 8, 2018, the Nova Scotia Government officially recognized this Decade;

AND WHEREAS anti-Black racism is rooted in the history of slavery, which is a part of the history of Nova Scotia;

AND WHEREAS on September 29, 2020, the Premier of Nova Scotia formally recognized and apologized for anti-Black racism and its impact on the lives of Nova Scotians of African descent;

AND WHEREAS it is important to recognize the heritage and resilience of Nova Scotia's Black community and the contributions that it has made and continues to make to Nova Scotia;

AND WHEREAS since slavery existed in Nova Scotia, it is appropriate to observe August 1st formally as Emancipation Day, to celebrate it, educate ourselves on its history and reflect on the need to eradicate systemic anti-Black racism, righting this historic wrong;

THEREFORE be it enacted by the Governor and Assembly as follows:

Short title

1 This Act may be cited as the *Emancipation Day Act*. 2021, c. 5, s. 1.

Emancipation Day

2 Throughout the Province, in each and every year, August 1st shall be kept and observed under the name “Emancipation Day”. 2021, c. 5, s. 2.
