

DAY OF REMEMBRANCE FOR THE LIVES LOST IN THE 1920 OCOEE ELECTION DAY MASSACRE

WHEREAS, Florida is dedicated to ensuring all eligible citizens regardless of race, gender, religion, creed, or national origin are freely able to exercise their right to vote; and

WHEREAS, in 1920, Black residents of Ocoee, Florida were intentionally and violently denied their right to vote, were murdered, and had their property destroyed in what is now known as the “1920 Election Day Massacre;” and

WHEREAS, until now, Florida has failed to uniformly educate its citizens about these tragic events and acknowledge the lives lost; and

WHEREAS, to address these past failures, HB 1213 was unanimously passed by the Florida Legislature, signed into law, and became effective July 1, 2020; and

WHEREAS, this new law requires, among other things, that public schools teach students about the 1920 Ocoee Election Day Massacre’s tragic history, that museums acknowledge this stain on Florida’s history through exhibits and educational programs, and that a state park, or facility therein, be named to recognize the Black Floridians who lost their lives and whose property was destroyed in efforts to prevent them from exercising their voting rights; and

WHEREAS, the City of Ocoee approved a Proclamation declaring November 2nd be a day of remembrance for those residents of Ocoee and West Orange County who lost their lives and property; and

WHEREAS, the harms of this tragedy are not limited to Ocoee, but rather have statewide impact as is clear by the Florida legislature’s unanimous support for HB 1213; and

WHEREAS, the harms of this tragedy remain even today, as voter intimidation and violence at polling locations is a genuine concern in modern elections;

WHEREAS, an important step to ensuring this will never happen again is remembering and honoring those who were killed and whose property was destroyed; and

WHEREAS, remembering and honoring the victims of the 1920 Election Day Massacre is long overdue.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Ron DeSantis, Governor of the State of Florida, do hereby declare November 2nd shall be a day of remembrance that honors the Black residents of Ocoee, Florida who were killed and had their property destroyed because they tried to exercise their fundamental right to vote.

IN WITNESS

WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Florida to be affixed at Tallahassee, the Capital, this ____ day of _____, in the year two thousand and twenty.