



Statement from Sister Cities International

June 18, 2021

Sister Cities International was deeply moved by yesterday's events at the White House as Juneteenth was officially signed into law as a federal holiday.

As our founder, President Dwight D. Eisenhower said in 1945, "the proudest human that walks the earth is a free American citizen." Opal Lee's lifelong quest to celebrate freedom from bondage and slavery has demonstrated the strength we have as individuals, and the power we hold when we stand together.

Opal's grit and determination embody what it means to be a citizen diplomat. Hailing from Fort Worth Texas, one of the most decorated Sister Cities program of the 1800+ partnerships worldwide, she is an extraordinary advocate for justice who has fought for 94 years to see this day become a reality. She demonstrates that our mission of "bringing people together, one friendship at a time" is a foundation for building lasting peace.

Most of all, yesterday's events send a message to our partners around the world that "the future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams" as First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt famously said.

The image of President Biden falling to his knees and hugging lifelong advocate Opal Lee will be etched into our hearts forever.

