

# Sen. Johnson: Modifies proposal to protect taxpayers

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**WASHINGTON** — U.S. senators Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) and James Lankford (R-Okla.) said Friday they are withdrawing a proposed substitute amendment meant to protect taxpayers from the fiscal burden of having to fund an 11th paid holiday for federal employees. Separately, Senator Johnson announced his intention to introduce a modified substitute amendment to achieve the same goal should the Senate decide to celebrate Juneteenth Day by giving federal employees another paid day off.

Federal employees already are given 10 paid holidays a year, and the Senate earlier this week was on track to approve, without discussion, debate or even a recorded vote, the addition of Juneteenth Day as an 11th paid holiday. The cost to taxpayers of an added federal holiday has been estimated at approximately \$600 million. Senator Johnson, while lauding the value of commemorating the emancipation of slaves, objected to the carelessness of adding hundreds of millions of dollars a year to the existing \$26.2 trillion federal debt even as 17.8 million Americans remain unemployed, due to covid-related lockdowns.

**“Although the substitute amendment I offered to the Juneteenth holiday bill had the desired effect of slowing down the passage of a new paid day off for federal workers, many were not happy with the proposal to swap a holiday celebrating emancipation with Columbus Day,”** said Senator Johnson in explaining his modified proposal.

**“Let me reiterate: I suggested Columbus Day for the swap because few Americans in the private sector get it as a paid holiday, and as a result, it is lightly celebrated, and would not be disruptive to most Americans’ schedules. I was in no way deprecating Christopher Columbus’**

**achievements or expressing any value judgment regarding his place in history. As I stated in an interview with the Milwaukee Press Club last Friday, I do not support efforts to erase America's rich history — not the good, the bad or the ugly.**

**“Rather than allow another paid day off for federal workers to pass without debate, or even a vote, I wanted to start a discussion, and I did. In fact, I received a number of very good suggestions. Accordingly, the original amendment is being withdrawn and I am introducing a modified one.**

**“Instead of eliminating a current holiday to make room for Juneteenth Day, I will be proposing to reduce the number of paid leave days federal employees receive, to offset the cost of the new holiday celebrating emancipation. This modification both preserves Columbus Day and the dollars of hard-working taxpayers.”**