

# U.S. Sen. Johnson: Halts attempt to give federal employees another paid day off at \$6 billion cost

Posted on Thursday, Jul 23, 2020

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

**WASHINGTON** — U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson stopped an effort to burden American taxpayers Wednesday with the cost of an additional paid holiday for federal employees — at a cost that by some estimates would reach \$6 billion over 10 years — and to do so without even debate or a vote.

[Johnson objected](#) to an attempt to pass by “unanimous consent,” without any examination in a committee, any debate by senators, or even a vote, the addition of an 11th paid holiday to the 10 that federal employees already get. The measure, S.4019, would recognize Juneteenth Day as a paid holiday for the federal workforce. Johnson’s objection halted the immediate passage of the bill.

**“I am happy to celebrate Juneteenth. I think we should celebrate the fact that we did remove an ‘original sin’ by emancipating slaves,”** said Johnson. **“I simply don’t believe we should make American taxpayers in the private sector pony up \$600 million a year, \$6 billion over 10 years, to give federal workers, who already are paid quite generously and have quite a few days off, one more paid day off.”**

Johnson pointed out that not only do federal employees get 10 paid holidays a year, they receive generous paid leave in other categories such as sick leave, vacation and paid parental leave. Federal employees who take advantage of all the paid days off to which they’re entitled can see a paid day off for every 1.4 days they work, Johnson showed:

Even for federal workers who don't take advantage of paid parental leave, the ratio can be a paid day off for every 4.3 days worked:

**“A four-day workweek for the entire year,”** said Johnson. **“Quite generous.”** He went on to point out that federal pay and benefits are both more generous than what is average in the private sector, with average private-sector workers earning only 55% in wages and benefits of what average federal workers do:

Johnson proposed that the Senate make taxpayers whole, if it added Juneteenth as a paid federal holiday, by taking away one of federal workers existing days of paid leave. **“Let's keep them whole,”** said Johnson. **“They will have the exact same number of days off as they have currently, and the American taxpayer will not be out an extra \$600 million per year or \$6 billion over 10 years.”**

Johnson's amendment to S.4019 was objected to by Sen. Edward Markey (D-Mass.), who sponsored the bill to give federal employees an additional paid day off.

###