

U.S. Sens. Johnson, Lankford: File amendment to replace Columbus Day with Juneteenth as new federal holiday

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WASHINGTON — U.S. Sens. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.), chairman of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, and committee member James Lankford (R-Okla.), filed an amendment to this [legislation](#) Wednesday that would replace Columbus Day with Juneteenth as a new federal holiday.

“In response to a bipartisan effort to give federal workers another day of paid leave by designating Juneteenth a federal holiday, we have offered a counterproposal that does not put us further in debt,” said Sen. Johnson. **“We support celebrating emancipation with a federal holiday, but believe we should eliminate a current holiday in exchange. We chose Columbus Day as a holiday that is lightly celebrated, and least disruptive to Americans’ schedules.”**

“Juneteenth is a day in our history that redefined the meaning of freedom and equality in America,” said Sen. Lankford. **“Throughout our history, we have strived to become a more perfect union and Juneteenth was a huge step in attaining that goal. We should celebrate these strides on the federal level while remaining cognizant of the impact the existing 10 federal holidays have on federal services and local businesses. We can reduce these impacts by replacing Columbus Day as a federal holiday with Juneteenth, America’s second independence day. I’m hopeful the Senate**

will support this amendment to celebrate this significant day in our nation's history.

Text of the amendment is available [here](#).

Background:

- This amendment follows [Franklin County, Ohio, replacing Columbus Day with Juneteenth as holiday for board of commissioner employees](#).
- The economic cost of a single federal holiday has been estimated around [\\$600 million](#) for paid time off for federal employees, and a [watchdog report](#) on FY2016 calculated that the federal government pays its workforce \$524 million per day.

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