



Gov. Pritzker Signs Legislation Making Juneteenth an Official State Holiday

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SPRINGFIELD — Today, Governor JB Pritzker signed legislation declaring June 19, Juneteenth, an official state holiday. To commemorate the abolition of slavery throughout the United States and its territories in 1865, Juneteenth will be recognized as National Freedom Day in Illinois.

The state continues to build upon efforts to actively dismantle systemic racism through robust reforms in the areas of criminal justice, education, health care, and economic opportunity. House Bill 3922 is another historic step in striving toward equity and justice across Illinois.

“Just as Illinois led the nation as the first state to ratify the Thirteenth Amendment, in 2021, we are leading the nation in tackling structural racism head on thanks to the guiding vision of Leader Lightford, Representative Ford, Speaker Welch and the entire Illinois Legislative Black Caucus,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “It brings me exceptional pride to sign into law the declaration of Juneteenth as a formal state holiday in Illinois, making us one of the few states in the nation to give it the full status it deserves.”

Illinois will recognize Juneteenth throughout the state, lowering all flags covered by the Illinois Flag Display Act to half-staff on Saturday, June 19. In addition, this year and henceforth, a Juneteenth flag will fly proudly over the State Capitol in Springfield.

“Making Juneteenth a state holiday is a breakthrough in Illinois history,” said Senate Majority Leader Kimberly A. Lightford (D-Maywood). “It reminds us that freedom and racial equality have always been a hard-fought battle for Black Americans and gives us an opportunity to celebrate our culture and achievements.”

“Today, we can all stand proud that Illinois will officially recognize America’s second independence day,” said House Speaker Emanuel “Chris” Welch (D-Westchester). “As the first African-American Speaker of the Illinois House of Representatives, this moment will forever be a treasure in my heart, and I hope it will become a treasure for all Illinoisans. It’s a day of remembrance, but also a day of joy and perseverance.”

“On June 19, 2020 Governor JB Pritzker made a commitment that he would work with the General Assembly to pass a bill to commemorate Juneteenth as a state holiday and today it happen,” said Representative La Shawn Ford (D-Chicago). “Today is the first day for Illinois to officially recognize the pain of the black enslaved and a day to move forward with work to repair the harms for black people.”

All Illinoisans are urged to reflect on our collective history and the actions we can take to build a more fair and equitable society. To learn more about the historical impact of Juneteenth, the [Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum](#) will display the

Emancipation Proclamation through July 6. In addition, the Illinois State Museum will showcase art celebrating Black lives through their [Noir Art Exhibition](#).

The legislation clarifies that Juneteenth will be a paid holiday for state workers and public education professionals when June 19 falls on a weekday. Given that June 19 falls on a Sunday in 2022, the first paid state holiday for Juneteenth will be in 2023.

HB 3922 is effective January 1, 2022.