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# It's Official: Juneteenth is a National Holiday; Bryan Announces Administration Leave Friday for Gov't Employees

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**June 23, 2018; Children on a float wave to the crowd during the annual Juneteenth parade in Center City Philadelphia, PA, By. GETTY IMAGES**

U.S. President Joe Biden on Thursday afternoon signed into law a bill making Juneteenth a national holiday. Juneteenth commemorates the end of slavery in the U.S., with the government stating that most federal employees would get the day off Friday.

Governor Albert Bryan also declared Juneteenth a USVI holiday and announced administrative leave for non-essential government employees and closure of government offices Friday. Friday is being recognized as the official holiday because Juneteenth, or June 19th, falls on a Saturday this

year.

Juneteenth, which is also known as Emancipation Day, Black Independence Day and Jubilee Day, marks the 1865 date when Maj. Gen. Gordon Granger arrived with federal troops in Galveston, Texas, and issued an order freeing the nation's last slaves. The action from Maj. Gen. Gordon came more than two months following the end of the Civil War and roughly 2½ years after President Abraham Lincoln had issued the Emancipation Proclamation freeing slaves in U.S. Southern states.

According to the Wall Street Journal, Juneteenth is the first new federal holiday created by Congress in nearly four decades, with the bill passing the Senate unanimously on Tuesday and was approved 415-14 in the House Wednesday.

"Juneteenth marks both a long, hard night of slavery and subjugation and a promise of a brighter morning to come," President Biden said [during a signing ceremony](#) Thursday afternoon.

Governor Albert Bryan stated, "Although we observe our emancipation on July 3rd, In solidarity with the rest of the nation, we will close government offices and grant administrative leave for non-essential government employees this Friday in honor of the Juneteenth holiday.

"Our country took an important step toward embracing the true telling of its history, and I thank President Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris and the Congress for their bold leadership in officially marking this significant event in black history."

Congresswoman Stacey Plaskett also issued a statement and announced the closure of her offices on Friday. "The declaration of June 19th, more commonly known as "Juneteenth", as a federal holiday is long overdue. I am very pleased that the Biden-Harris Administration decided to take this historic action in recognizing the date that marked the end of slavery in the United States," she said.

"In recognition of this monumental step and in accordance with federal office guidelines regarding federal holidays, my offices in Washington, D.C., St. Croix and St. Thomas will be closed on Friday, June 18, 2021 to officially observe the Juneteenth holiday and will reopen on Monday, June 21, 2021," the congresswoman added.