



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kevin S. Parker

## State Senator Kevin Parker Passes Legislation That Would Make Juneteenth An Official Holiday In New York State

KEVIN S. PARKER July 24, 2020

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(Albany, NY)- The passage of Senator Parker’s bill, S8598, has made “Juneteenth” an official state holiday. Two years after Abraham Lincoln had signed the Emancipation Proclamation in January 1863, those words of freedom were slow to reach the far southern state of Texas; June 19, 1865 marks the date Union forces reached Texas and emancipated enslaved African-Americans, and as such, presumptively ended slavery in the United States.

Currently, only a few states recognize June 19 as an official holiday. Senator Parker's bill adds New York to the small list of states to recognize Juneteenth as an official public holiday, which means that schools and similar public institutions will be closed. The enactment of Juneteenth as an official holiday is inseparable from the context of current events however; which has brought forth an increase vigilance and tremendous social awareness to this country. Such awareness has revealed to us how much we, as a nation, have accomplished, and yet how far we have to go.

"This bill is an acknowledgement of this historical date" Senator Parker remarked, "and it serves not as an annual reprimand of this country's flaws, but as a memorial for those who fought and died to end enslavement in this country, and a memorial for those who, having never experienced freedom, lived and died in bondage."

Senator Parker's bill is a pivotal step forward towards meaningful change for this country. The institution of slavery, the great scar of this nation, must be faced before America can ever be made whole. Parker's bill is a request of this state, and of this nation, to engage in the difficult task of self-reflection, so that we may truly acknowledge our nation's history in order to move towards a brighter future.

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RELATED LEGISLATION

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## 2019-S8598

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
- 

Relates to designating June nineteenth as a public holiday

June 17, 2020

Senate Floor Calendar

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Do you support this bill?