

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1803

As Reported By House Committee On:
State Government

Title: An act relating to holidays.

Brief Description: Making election day a holiday.

Sponsors: Representatives Campbell, Pruitt, Anderson and Veloria.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
State Government, March 3, 1993, DPS.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Anderson, Chair; Veloria, Vice Chair; Campbell; Conway; King; and Pruitt.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Reams, Ranking Minority Member; Vance, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; and Dyer.

Staff: Kenneth Hirst (786-7105).

Background: State laws prescribe legal holidays for the employees of the state and school holidays for the common school system.

The state's general election is held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. Every four years, this is also the date prescribed by federal law for conducting the general election for the offices of president and vice president of the United States.

Summary of Substitute Bill: A new state legal holiday and school holiday are established. These holidays are on the date of the statewide general election held in a presidential election year.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Rather than declaring the general election in each even-numbered year to be a holiday, as in the original bill, the substitute bill declares the presidential election day to be a holiday.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: (1) Most industrialized nations declare election day to be a holiday or conduct elections on the weekend to make getting to the polls easier for voters. (2) The bill will improve the public's access to voting.

Testimony Against: Until 1975, election day was a holiday in this state. The holiday was dropped at a time when the state moved its holidays to Mondays to reduce costs. The increased availability of absentee voting may also have influenced dropping election day as a holiday.

Witnesses: Representative Campbell (in favor); Bev Hermanson, Washington Federation of State Employees (in favor); and John Pearson, Office of the Secretary of State.