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**State Government & Tribal Relations  
Committee**

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**HB 2312**

**Brief Description:** Making Juneteenth a legal holiday.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Morgan, Lovick, Pettigrew, Entenman, Ortiz-Self, Ramos, Lekanoff, Santos, Gregerson, Valdez, Kirby, Slatter, Thai, Duerr, Hudgins, Bergquist, Stonier, Goodman, Chapman, Pellicciotti, Callan, Appleton, Ormsby, Sullivan, Kilduff, Leavitt, Ramel, Shewmake, Frame, Davis, Walen, Orwall, Sells, Macri, Doglio, Peterson, Riccelli and Pollet.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Designates the 19th of June, known as Juneteenth, as a state legal holiday.
- Legislatively recognizes February as Black History Month.

**Hearing Date:** 1/15/20

**Staff:** Carrington Skinner (786-7192).

**Background:**

*State Recognition of Certain Days.*

Washington recognizes 10 specific days and all Sundays as state legal holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, President's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veterans' Day, Thanksgiving Day, Native American Heritage Day, and Christmas Day. The list of legal holidays has undergone several changes since being first designated by the Washington Territory in 1888. Another 17 specific days are recognized by the Legislature, but are not considered legal holidays.

*Juneteenth.*

On June 19, 1865, more than two years after the effective date of the Emancipation Proclamation, news reached Galveston, Texas, that the Civil War had ended and enslaved people

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were now free. That day has been celebrated to commemorate the abolishment of slavery and the contributions of African Americans to society, and is now know as "Juneteenth" or Emancipation Day. Forty-six states recognize Juneteenth as either a holiday or day of observance. In 2007 the Legislature declared the nineteenth of June to be recognized as Juneteenth, a day of remembrance for the day slaves learned of their freedom.

*Black History Month.*

In 1926 Negro History Week was first held in the second week of February to promote black history and to celebrate accomplishments of African Americans. Based on that idea and others developed by college students and educators in the 1960s, President Gerald Ford officially recognized Black History Month in 1976. Since then, each President has issued proclamations recognizing the month and announcing the year's theme.

**Summary of Bill:**

The nineteenth of June, known as Juneteenth, is designated as a state legal holiday. February is legislatively recognized as Black History Month.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 13, 2020.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.