

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SHB 1016

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**As Passed House:**  
February 25, 2021

**Title:** An act relating to making Juneteenth a legal holiday.

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

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Morgan, Lovick, Ryu, Wicks, Ortiz-Self, Berry, Leavitt, Johnson, J., Kloba, Shewmake, Simmons, Bateman, Lekanoff, Duerr, Fitzgibbon, Chopp, Slatter, Ramos, Ramel, Peterson, Gregerson, Valdez, Callan, Young, Hackney, Cody, Ormsby, Riccelli, Rude, Stonier, Fey, Frame, Santos, Macri, Taylor, Davis, Pollet, Bergquist and Harris-Talley).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

State Government & Tribal Relations: 1/13/21, 1/20/21 [DP];  
Appropriations: 2/1/21, 2/4/21 [DPS].

**Floor Activity:**

Passed House: 2/25/21, 89-9.

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Designates June 19, commonly known as Juneteenth, as a state legal holiday.
- Contains a null and void clause.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL RELATIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Valdez, Chair; Lekanoff, Vice Chair; Volz, Ranking Minority Member; Dolan and Gregerson.

**Minority Report:** Without recommendation. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Walsh, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Graham.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Staff:** Jason Zolle (786-7124).

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## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 32 members: Representatives Ormsby, Chair; Bergquist, Vice Chair; Gregerson, Vice Chair; Macri, Vice Chair; Chambers, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Corry, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; MacEwen, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Boehnke, Caldier, Chandler, Chopp, Cody, Dolan, Dye, Fitzgibbon, Frame, Hansen, Harris, Hoff, Jacobsen, Johnson, J., Lekanoff, Pollet, Rude, Ryu, Schmick, Senn, Springer, Steele, Stonier, Sullivan and Tharinger.

**Minority Report:** Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Stokesbary, Ranking Minority Member.

**Staff:** Jessica Van Horne (786-7288).

### **Background:**

Juneteenth. On June 19, 1865, more than two years after the effective date of the Emancipation Proclamation, people in Galveston, Texas finally learned that the Civil War had ended and enslaved people had been freed. June 19 has subsequently been celebrated as Juneteenth or Emancipation Day to commemorate the abolishment of slavery and recognize the contributions of Black/African Americans to society. Forty-six states recognize Juneteenth as either a holiday or day of observance. In 2007 the Legislature designated Juneteenth a legislatively recognized day as a day of remembrance for when slaves learned of their freedom.

State Holidays. Washington recognizes 10 specific days 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. Another 17 specific days are recognized by the Legislature, but they are not considered legal holidays. Some of those days commemorate specific events, such as Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day. Other days commemorate groups of people, such as Korean-American Day, or certain ideas, such as Human Trafficking Awareness Day and Public Lands Day.

### **Summary of Substitute Bill:**

June 19, known as Juneteenth, is designated a state legal holiday.

The bill is null and void unless funded in the operating budget.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony (State Government & Tribal Relations):**

(In support) Making Juneteenth a paid state holiday is a step toward racial reconciliation. It is not enough to just recognize and celebrate the day; making Juneteenth an official state holiday will bring awareness and consciousness to a crucial day in history. In spite of the Emancipation Proclamation, many people were not eager to get the message of abolition to all the slaves in confederate states. The images of the confederate flag being waved in the halls of the United States Capitol last week are a poignant reminder that the ideology of the confederacy has created the inequity that is still experienced today. This bill is necessary to further educate communities about the history of slavery and its devastating impacts. Cost to the state was a concern last session, and others are concerned that this bill does not actually address inequity in the state. True, making Juneteenth a paid holiday will not make racial inequity go away and it will not end racism. But it will send a message that the State of Washington recognizes that slavery was an atrocity, and it ensures that we remember when Black slaves were released from bondage. This bill is therefore not about a holiday, but it is about taking a step toward healing and reconciliation. The social uprisings of the past year have demanded such action.

(Opposed) None.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Appropriations):**

(In support) Juneteenth represents freedom and emancipation, and the monumental nature of the Emancipation Proclamation. Celebrating this holiday has often been confined to the Black community. It should be celebrated across the United States, much like the Fourth of July. Making Juneteenth a state holiday would acknowledge how this country overcame its original sin and show that our state is working towards an anti-racist future. The United States already honors the Emancipation Proclamation and the President who signed it. Our state should also honor the lives of the enslaved people that the Proclamation freed.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying (State Government & Tribal Relations):** Representative Morgan, prime sponsor; Representative Lovick; Kristen Gledhill, South Sound Antiracist Project; Marcus Glasper, Blacks United in Leadership and Diversity; Sam Cho, Port of Seattle; Jim Mendoza; Monica Wilson and Da'Mea Birdsong, Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; Valerie Hunt, Seattle Central College; Sandra Toussaint, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Council 28, Washington Federation of State Employees; Michelle Merriweather, Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle; Paul

Benz, Faith Action Network; Paula Sardinas and Emily Pinckney, FMS Global Strategies/Washington Build Back Black Alliance; Chaune' Fitzgerald, Women of Wisdom Tri-Cities; Nasue Nishida, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; RaShelle Davis, Office of the Governor; and Jonathan Johnson.

**Persons Testifying (Appropriations):** Bety Wilkerson, Spokane City Council; Matt Chambers, International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 23; Sandra Toussaint, American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees Council 28 Washington Federation of State Employees; and Preston Dwoskin.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (State Government & Tribal Relations):** None.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Appropriations):** None.