
State Government & Tribal Relations Committee

HB 1617

Brief Description: Aligning state and school holidays.

Sponsors: Representatives Morgan, Leavitt, Johnson, J. and Ramel.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Specifies that all state holidays are also school holidays on which school may not be taught.

Hearing Date: 1/10/22

Staff: Jason Zolle (786-7124).

Background:

State Holidays.

Washington recognizes 11 specific days as state legal holidays: New Year's Day; Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; President's Day; Memorial Day; Juneteenth; 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.

School 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;

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Thanksgiving Day; Native American Heritage Day; and Christmas Day.

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. In 2021 Juneteenth became a state holiday in Washington. That act did not, however, explicitly provide that Juneteenth is also a school holiday.

Summary of Bill:

All state holidays are also school holidays on which school may not be taught. The list of specific school holidays is removed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 5, 2022.

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