

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SHB 1617

---

---

**As Passed House:**  
February 2, 2022

**Title:** An act relating to aligning state and school holidays.

**Brief Description:** Aligning state and school holidays.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on State Government & Tribal Relations (originally sponsored by Representatives Morgan, Leavitt, Johnson, J., Ramel, Callan, Davis, Taylor, Santos, Simmons, Riccelli, Ormsby and Harris-Talley).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

State Government & Tribal Relations: 1/10/22, 1/13/22 [DPS].

**Floor Activity:**

Passed House: 2/2/22, 88-8.

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Specifies that all state holidays are also school holidays on which school may not be taught.

---

### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL RELATIONS

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Valdez, Chair; Lekanoff, Vice Chair; Volz, Ranking Minority Member; Dolan, Graham and Gregerson.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Walsh, Assistant Ranking Minority Member.

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

---

*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.*

## **Background:**

### State Holidays.

Washington recognizes 11 specific days as state legal holidays: New Year's Day; Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; Presidents' 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 school holidays: New Year's Day; Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; Presidents' Day; Memorial Day; Independence Day; Labor Day; Veterans' Day; 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 Substitute 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:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect on July 1, 2022.

## **Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) Last session the Legislature passed House Bill 1016 with bipartisan support to make Juneteenth a paid state holiday. This is a trailer bill to clarify which state holidays schools should observe. The bill simply aligns state and school holidays. Some schools

chose to celebrate Juneteenth last year even though it was not required. This bill addresses that inconsistency. It is an opportunity for students to learn the true history of slavery in this country and how slavery, black codes, and redlining still impact people of color in this state and country.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) The bill should include language to clarify that hourly school employees are eligible to receive the benefits of Juneteenth being a school holiday.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Representative Melanie Morgan, prime sponsor; and Janie White, Washington Education Association.

(Other) Jennifer McMaster, Public School Employees of Washington.

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