

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## HB 2209

---

---

As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
State Government & Elections, February 20, 2024

**Title:** An act relating to celebrating lunar new year.

**Brief Description:** Celebrating lunar new year.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Thai, Ryu, Gregerson, Senn, Santos, Ramel, Reeves, Morgan, Reed, Fosse, Cortes, Macri, Doglio, Paul, Pollet and Riccelli.

**Brief History:** Passed House: 1/31/24, 96-1.

**Committee Activity:** State Government & Elections: 2/16/24, 2/20/24 [DP, w/oRec].

### Brief Summary of Bill

- Designates the Lunar New Year as a legislatively recognized day.
- Encourages governmental entities and educational and cultural organizations to celebrate the Lunar New Year.
- Requires the State Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs to create programming and resources for entities to use in their celebrations.

---

## SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & ELECTIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Hunt, Chair; Valdez, Vice Chair; Wilson, J., Ranking Member; Hasegawa and Kuderer.

**Minority Report:** That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Dozier and Fortunato.

**Staff:** Greg Vogel (786-7413)

---

*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:** Washington recognizes 11 specific days as paid state legal holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Presidents' Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Juneteenth, Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, Native American Heritage Day, and Christmas.

Another 19 specific days are recognized by the Legislature, but they are not considered legal holidays.

**Summary of Bill:** The Lunar New Year is a legislatively recognized day. It is defined as the day of the second new moon following the winter solstice, or the third new moon following the winter solstice should an intercalary month intervene.

The Legislature encourages state governmental entities, local governments, schools and institutions of higher education, and cultural organizations to celebrate the Lunar New Year. The State Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs is required to create Lunar New Year programming and resources for entities to use in planning and structuring their celebrations.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: Lunar New Year is a time to honor the past, celebrate the present, and look forward to the future. It is an opportunity to share the richness and diversity of Asian cultures. Regardless of the particular country's customs, the essence of the celebration transcends borders and unites us in our shared appreciation of humanity.

It's celebrated all over the world and officially recognized as a holiday in eight countries. Designating Lunar New Year as a legislatively recognized day is an acknowledgement to the rich cultural heritage of Asian communities in our state and a clear message that the contributions of our communities are valued and respected. The programming requirements ensure celebrations are meaningful, authentic, and educational.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative My-Linh Thai, Prime Sponsor; Jason Moon; Lynne Robinson, City of Bellevue Mayor; Serena Chang; William Saguil; Capri Crosby; Ava Waters; Aaron Gervacio; Carrie Huie, Washington State Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs; Sun Burford; Karin Butler, Multicultural Association of Edmonds; Inaaya Habib.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.