
HOUSE BILL 1446

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By Representatives Abell and Eslick

Read first time 01/21/25. Referred to Committee on State Government & Tribal Relations.

1 AN ACT Relating to changing the state holiday called Presidents'
2 Day to George Washington's Birthday (observed); amending RCW
3 1.16.050; and creating a new section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that:

6 George Washington was born on February 22, 1732, in Virginia. By
7 the time he reached the age of 16, he had completed several practice
8 surveys and accompanied the surveyor of Prince William county on a
9 month-long trip across the Blue Ridge mountains. In July 1749 at the
10 young age of 17, George Washington was appointed as the county
11 surveyor for the newly created frontier county of Culpeper. There are
12 199 professional surveys attributed to George Washington.

13 In late 1753, George Washington became involved in the French and
14 Indian War when he was selected as the British emissary to the French
15 frontier establishment and sent to deliver an ultimatum to the French
16 ordering them to desist from their encroachments in the Ohio Valley.
17 In 1754 he became lieutenant colonel of the Virginia Regiment, due in
18 part to his backcountry knowledge and map-making skills gained from
19 surveying. In 1774 the Virginia provincial convention elected George
20 Washington to be one of the seven delegates to the first continental
21 congress and he served in the second continental congress the

1 following year. During the assembly of the second continental
2 congress assembled in Philadelphia in May 1775, George Washington was
3 elected Commander in Chief of the continental army. On July 3, 1775,
4 at Cambridge, Massachusetts, he took command of the continental army.

5 George Washington skillfully led the continental army through all
6 phases of the American Revolution. This includes the siege of Boston,
7 battles of Trenton and Princeton, wintering at Valley Forge, and the
8 decisive victory at Yorktown. Upon conclusion of combat, George
9 Washington voluntarily resigned his commission to the second
10 continental congress, thereby exemplifying civilian authority over
11 the military.

12 After the war, George Washington was influential in shaping the
13 various provisions of the nation's Constitution at the constitutional
14 convention in Philadelphia in 1787. When the new Constitution was
15 ratified by the states, the electoral college unanimously elected
16 George Washington as the nation's first president.

17 George Washington served two terms as president of the United
18 States. During his presidency, George Washington established the
19 norms and customs for his successors, avoided combat with major
20 European powers, and set the United States on a path to security and
21 prosperity. He voluntarily left office in 1797, declining to run for
22 a third term, and returned to private life at Mount Vernon.

23 Upon his death, George Washington was mourned by the nation and
24 eulogized by Henry "Light Horse Harry" Lee as "First in war, first in
25 peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen."

26 On November 11, 1889, the state of Washington was admitted as the
27 42nd state of the United States of America. Recognizing the unique
28 historical stature of George Washington, the state was named in his
29 honor.

30 In recognition of his service to this country, George
31 Washington's birthday became the first federal holiday to honor an
32 individual's birthdate. February 22nd was observed as a public
33 federal holiday until 1971 when former President Nixon declared a
34 single holiday to be called Presidents' Day which would be observed
35 on the third Monday in February in order to honor all past
36 presidents. However, the name Presidents' Day never became the legal
37 name of the holiday and the day is still legally called George
38 Washington's Birthday on official federal government writings.

39 With the impending 250th anniversary of the United States
40 occurring on July 4, 2026, changing the name of the state holiday

1 known as Presidents' Day to George Washington's Birthday (observed)
2 is more appropriate as the nation reflects on their founding
3 generation and the life and legacy of George Washington.

4 **Sec. 2.** RCW 1.16.050 and 2024 c 76 s 3 are each amended to read
5 as follows:

6 (1) The following are state legal holidays:

7 (a) Sunday;

8 (b) The first day of January, commonly called New Year's Day;

9 (c) The third Monday of January, celebrated as the anniversary of
10 the birth of Martin Luther King, Jr.;

11 (d) The third Monday of February, to be known as (~~Presidents'~~
12 ~~Day~~) George Washington's Birthday (observed) and celebrated as the
13 anniversary of the birth(~~s of Abraham Lincoln and~~) of George
14 Washington;

15 (e) The last Monday of May, commonly known as Memorial Day;

16 (f) The nineteenth day of June, recognized as Juneteenth, a day
17 of remembrance for the day the African slaves learned of their
18 freedom;

19 (g) The fourth day of July, the anniversary of the Declaration of
20 Independence;

21 (h) The first Monday in September, to be known as Labor Day;

22 (i) The eleventh day of November, to be known as Veterans Day;

23 (j) The fourth Thursday in November, to be known as Thanksgiving
24 Day;

25 (k) The Friday immediately following the fourth Thursday in
26 November, to be known as Native American Heritage Day; and

27 (l) The twenty-fifth day of December, commonly called Christmas
28 Day.

29 (2) Employees of the state and its political subdivisions, except
30 employees of school districts and except those nonclassified
31 employees of institutions of higher education who hold appointments
32 or are employed under contracts to perform services for periods of
33 less than twelve consecutive months, are entitled to one paid holiday
34 per calendar year in addition to those specified in this section.
35 Each employee of the state or its political subdivisions may select
36 the day on which the employee desires to take the additional holiday
37 provided for in this section after consultation with the employer
38 pursuant to guidelines to be promulgated by rule of the appropriate

1 personnel authority, or in the case of local government by ordinance
2 or resolution of the legislative authority.

3 (3) Employees of the state and its political subdivisions,
4 including employees of school districts and those nonclassified
5 employees of institutions of higher education who hold appointments
6 or are employed under contracts to perform services for periods of
7 less than twelve consecutive months, are entitled to two unpaid
8 holidays per calendar year for a reason of faith or conscience or an
9 organized activity conducted under the auspices of a religious
10 denomination, church, or religious organization. This includes
11 employees of public institutions of higher education, including
12 community colleges, technical colleges, and workforce training
13 programs. The employee may select the days on which the employee
14 desires to take the two unpaid holidays after consultation with the
15 employer pursuant to guidelines to be promulgated by rule of the
16 appropriate personnel authority, or in the case of local government
17 by ordinance or resolution of the legislative authority. If an
18 employee prefers to take the two unpaid holidays on specific days for
19 a reason of faith or conscience, or an organized activity conducted
20 under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or religious
21 organization, the employer must allow the employee to do so unless
22 the employee's absence would impose an undue hardship on the employer
23 or the employee is necessary to maintain public safety. Undue
24 hardship shall have the meaning established in rule by the office of
25 financial management under RCW 43.41.109.

26 (4) If any of the state legal holidays specified in this section
27 are also federal legal holidays but observed on different dates, only
28 the state legal holidays are recognized as a paid legal holiday for
29 employees of the state and its political subdivisions. However, for
30 port districts and the law enforcement and public transit employees
31 of municipal corporations, either the federal or the state legal
32 holiday is recognized as a paid legal holiday, but in no case may
33 both holidays be recognized as a paid legal holiday for employees.

34 (5) Whenever any state legal holiday:

35 (a) Other than Sunday, falls upon a Sunday, the following Monday
36 is the legal holiday; or

37 (b) Falls upon a Saturday, the preceding Friday is the legal
38 holiday.

39 (6) Nothing in this section may be construed to have the effect
40 of adding or deleting the number of paid holidays provided for in an

1 agreement between employees and employers of political subdivisions
2 of the state or as established by ordinance or resolution of the
3 local government legislative authority.

4 (7) The legislature declares that the following days are
5 recognized as provided in this subsection, but may not be considered
6 legal holidays for any purpose:

7 (a) The thirteenth day of January, recognized as Korean-American
8 day;

9 (b) The twelfth day of October, recognized as Columbus day;

10 (c) The ninth day of April, recognized as former prisoner of war
11 recognition day;

12 (d) The twenty-sixth day of January, recognized as Washington
13 army and air national guard day;

14 (e) The seventh day of August, recognized as purple heart
15 recipient recognition day;

16 (f) The second Sunday in October, recognized as Washington state
17 children's day;

18 (g) The sixteenth day of April, recognized as Mother Joseph day;

19 (h) The fourth day of September, recognized as Marcus Whitman
20 day;

21 (i) The seventh day of December, recognized as Pearl Harbor
22 remembrance day;

23 (j) The twenty-seventh day of July, recognized as national Korean
24 war veterans armistice day;

25 (k) The nineteenth day of February, recognized as civil liberties
26 day of remembrance;

27 (l) The thirtieth day of March, recognized as welcome home
28 Vietnam veterans day;

29 (m) The eleventh day of January, recognized as human trafficking
30 awareness day;

31 (n) The thirty-first day of March, recognized as Cesar Chavez
32 day;

33 (o) The tenth day of April, recognized as Dolores Huerta day;

34 (p) The fourth Saturday of September, recognized as public lands
35 day;

36 (q) The eighteenth day of December, recognized as blood donor
37 day;

38 (r) The fifteenth day of May, recognized as water safety day;

39 (s) The ninth day of March, recognized as Billy Frank Jr. day;
40 and

1 (t) The date corresponding with the second new moon following the
2 winter solstice, or the third new moon following the winter solstice
3 should an intercalary month intervene, recognized as the lunar new
4 year.

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