

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SSB 5756

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
State Government & Tribal Relations

**Title:** An act relating to establishing the semiquincentennial committee.

**Brief Description:** Establishing the semiquincentennial committee.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on State Government & Elections (originally sponsored by Senators Hunt, Muzzall and Conway; by request of Lieutenant Governor, Washington State Historical Society).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

State Government & Tribal Relations: 2/16/22, 2/17/22 [DP].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Establishes the Semiquincentennial Committee to coordinate and provide guidance for Washington's official observance of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States.

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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:** Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Walsh, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Graham.

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

**Background:**

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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.*

The Second Continental Congress, a meeting of delegates from the 13 colonies, voted for the independence of the United States on July 2, 1776, in Philadelphia. The Declaration of Independence was approved by Congress on July 4. Independence Day is celebrated annually on July 4.

Congress enacted the United States Semiquincentennial Commission Act of 2016 to establish a commission to plan, develop, and coordinate the commemoration of United States history leading up to the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States, which will be celebrated on July 4, 2026.

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### **Summary of Bill:**

The Semiquincentennial Committee (Committee) is established to coordinate and provide guidance for Washington's official observance of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States, as marked by the Declaration of Independence in 1776.

### Committee Members.

The Committee includes the following members:

- one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate;
- one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;
- the Lieutenant Governor, or their designee;
- the Secretary of State, or their designee;
- the Superintendent of Public Instruction, or their designee;
- the director, or their designee, for the following agencies: Governor's Office of Indian Affairs; the Washington State Historical Society (WSHS); Eastern Washington State Historical Society; Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation; Washington State Parks; Department of Commerce; and Washington State Arts Commission;
- one member selected by each of the following: the Commission on African American Affairs; the Commission on Asian American Affairs; the Commission on Hispanic Affairs; the LGBTQ Commission; and the Women's Commission;
- one member representing Humanities Washington, appointed by the Governor; and
- any additional persons invited by the Committee to serve as honorary members.

The Lieutenant Governor is the chair of the Committee. The WSHS provides administrative support to the Committee and may employ personnel, contract for services, and receive, expend, and allocate gifts, grants, and donations on behalf of the Committee.

### Committee Duties.

The Committee must submit a yearly report of its activities to the Legislature. The Committee may:

- cooperate with national, regional, statewide, and local entities promoting the semiquincentennial;
- assist, plan, or conduct semiquincentennial events;
- support, plan, or produce educational resources and programs related to the semiquincentennial;
- engage in or encourage fundraising activities including revenue-generating enterprises, as well as the solicitation of charitable gifts, grants, or donations;
- coordinate interagency participation in the observance; create subcommittees comprised of committee members, honorary members, and community members to further the goals of the Committee; and
- perform other related duties.

The Semiquincentennial Account is created to finance the activities of the Committee. The Lieutenant Governor and the director of the WSHS may authorize expenditures from the account. An appropriation is not required for expenditures.

The act expires June 30, 2027.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) This bill creates the infrastructure to allow Washington to participate in the celebrations of "USA 250." It is a bipartisan bill with no fiscal impact. The account in the bill is created to empower the Committee to fundraise and to receive federal funds that are available. It is similar to what the state did for the celebrations in 1976 and 1989. The Washington State History Museum has the tools and infrastructure to do this. Once the Committee meets, it will be able to decide the breadth of activities it would like to do, which will determine the fiscal impact. Meetings have been ongoing for the last five years as preparation. Many other states have already set up similar Committees, and others are about to do so.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Denny Heck, Lieutenant Governor; Jennifer Kilmer, Washington State Historical Society; Manny Cawaling, Inspire Washington.

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