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## State Government & Tribal Relations Committee

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### HB 1516

**Brief Description:** Making lunar new year a state legal holiday.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Thai, Caldier, Entenman, Harris, Farivar, Ryu, Goodman, Reed, Fey, Steele, Ormsby, Ortiz-Self, Hansen, Springer, Bronoske, Slatter, Walen, Wylie, Fitzgibbon, Sandlin, Lekanoff, Senn, Fosse, Doglio, Taylor, Kloba, Peterson, Cortes, Street, Simmons, Ramel, Duerr, Gregerson, Schmidt, Reeves, Pollet, Macri, Riccelli, Morgan and Bergquist.

<p><b>Brief Summary of Bill</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Designates the Lunar New Year as a state legal holiday to be observed the Saturday before the beginning of the Lunar New Year.</li></ul>
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**Hearing Date:** 2/8/23

**Staff:** Devon Mann (786-7290) and Desiree Omli (786-7105).

**Background:**

The Lunar New Year.

Lunar New Year is a celebration of the arrival of spring and the beginning of a new year. Lunar New Year is a significant holiday in East and Southeast Asian cultures, including in Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean communities, among others. The beginning of Lunar New Year varies by year, as it is tied to the lunar calendar which is based on the cycles of the moon, and the duration of the holiday varies by culture. In America, Lunar New Year is commonly associated with the Chinese New Year, also known as the Spring Festival. This is typically a 15-day celebration beginning on the day of the second new moon after the winter solstice, which typically falls sometime between the end of January and mid-February. In Vietnam, the holiday is known as Tet Nguyen Dan, also commonly referred to as Tet, and in Korea it is known as

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In China, the holiday can be traced as far back as the Shang Dynasty (1600–1046 BCE) with its roots celebrating the end to the harvest and time to spend with family. Each culture celebrates the Lunar New Year differently with various foods and traditions that symbolize prosperity, abundance, and togetherness. Among other traditions, people give offerings to ancestors and deities, often in the form of food and money, and hang red lanterns to welcome health, wealth, and good fortune in the new year.

State Holidays.

Washington recognizes 11 specific days as paid state legal holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, President's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Juneteenth, Labor Day, Veterans' Day, Thanksgiving Day, Native American Heritage Day, and Christmas Day. When a state legal holiday falls on a Saturday, the preceding Friday is the legal holiday. State legal holidays are also school holidays.

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.

**Summary of Bill:**

The Saturday before the beginning of the Lunar New Year is designated a state legal holiday in observance of the Lunar New Year. Although legal holidays that fall on a Saturday are typically observed on the preceding Friday, Lunar New Year is an exception and will be observed on the appropriate Saturday.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 1, 2023.

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