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**HOUSE BILL 2209**

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**State of Washington**

**68th Legislature**

**2024 Regular Session**

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

Read first time 01/09/24. Referred to Committee on State Government & Tribal Relations.

1 AN ACT Relating to celebrating lunar new year; reenacting and  
2 amending RCW 1.16.050; adding a new section to chapter 43.117 RCW;  
3 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 each year the  
6 people of the great state of Washington unite to celebrate the Lunar  
7 New Year, joining to distinguish Asian American joy, cultures, and  
8 beautiful diversity. The legislature further acknowledges both the  
9 wonderful heritage and collective trauma of our Asian American  
10 ancestors, and it deeply appreciates the Asian American community  
11 that has made Washington a vibrant place for us all to call home,  
12 building and supporting their communities despite the uncertainty  
13 they have faced at times. The legislature highlights the solidarity  
14 and strength of the Asian American community in the face of violent  
15 racism, during the past few years, well before, and ongoing. The  
16 legislature intends the Lunar New Year to serve as a time to embrace  
17 reflections and understanding as we look towards renewal.

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.117  
19 RCW to read as follows:

1 (1) The lunar new year of each year is designated as a time for  
2 people of this state to celebrate Asian American culture and to  
3 commemorate the contributions of Asian Americans to the history and  
4 heritage of Washington state.

5 (2) The legislature encourages state governmental entities, local  
6 governments, schools and institutions of higher education, and  
7 cultural organizations to celebrate the lunar new year.

8 (3) The commission shall create lunar new year programming and  
9 resources that these entities may use in planning and structuring  
10 their celebrations.

11 (4) For purposes of this section, "the lunar new year" is the  
12 date corresponding with the second new moon following the winter  
13 solstice, or the third new moon following the winter solstice should  
14 an intercalary month intervene.

15 **Sec. 3.** RCW 1.16.050 and 2023 c 387 s 3 and 2023 c 181 s 2 are  
16 each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

17 (1) The following are state legal holidays:

18 (a) Sunday;

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

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

22 (d) The third Monday of February, to be known as Presidents' Day  
23 and celebrated as the anniversary of the births of Abraham Lincoln  
24 and George Washington;

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

26 (f) The nineteenth day of June, recognized as Juneteenth, a day  
27 of remembrance for the day the African slaves learned of their  
28 freedom;

29 (g) The fourth day of July, the anniversary of the Declaration of  
30 Independence;

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

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

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

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

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

1           (2) Employees of the state and its political subdivisions, except  
2 employees of school districts and except those nonclassified  
3 employees of institutions of higher education who hold appointments  
4 or are employed under contracts to perform services for periods of  
5 less than twelve consecutive months, are entitled to one paid holiday  
6 per calendar year in addition to those specified in this section.  
7 Each employee of the state or its political subdivisions may select  
8 the day on which the employee desires to take the additional holiday  
9 provided for in this section after consultation with the employer  
10 pursuant to guidelines to be promulgated by rule of the appropriate  
11 personnel authority, or in the case of local government by ordinance  
12 or resolution of the legislative authority.

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

36           (4) If any of the state legal holidays specified in this section  
37 are also federal legal holidays but observed on different dates, only  
38 the state legal holidays are recognized as a paid legal holiday for  
39 employees of the state and its political subdivisions. However, for  
40 port districts and the law enforcement and public transit employees

1 of municipal corporations, either the federal or the state legal  
2 holiday is recognized as a paid legal holiday, but in no case may  
3 both holidays be recognized as a paid legal holiday for employees.

4 (5) Whenever any state legal holiday:

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

7 (b) Falls upon a Saturday, the preceding Friday is the legal  
8 holiday.

9 (6) Nothing in this section may be construed to have the effect  
10 of adding or deleting the number of paid holidays provided for in an  
11 agreement between employees and employers of political subdivisions  
12 of the state or as established by ordinance or resolution of the  
13 local government legislative authority.

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

17 (a) The thirteenth day of January, recognized as Korean-American  
18 day;

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

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

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

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

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

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

29 (h) The fourth day of September, recognized as Marcus Whitman  
30 day;

31 (i) The seventh day of December, recognized as Pearl Harbor  
32 remembrance day;

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

35 (k) The nineteenth day of February, recognized as civil liberties  
36 day of remembrance;

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

39 (m) The eleventh day of January, recognized as human trafficking  
40 awareness day;

- 1           (n) The thirty-first day of March, recognized as Cesar Chavez  
2 day;
- 3           (o) The tenth day of April, recognized as Dolores Huerta day;
- 4           (p) The fourth Saturday of September, recognized as public lands  
5 day;
- 6           (q) The eighteenth day of December, recognized as blood donor  
7 day;
- 8           (r) The fifteenth day of May, recognized as water safety day;  
9 ((and))
- 10          (s) The ninth day of March, recognized as Billy Frank Jr. day;  
11 and
- 12          (t) The date corresponding with the second new moon following the  
13 winter solstice, or the third new moon following the winter solstice  
14 should an intercalary month intervene, recognized as the lunar new  
15 year.

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