

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1116

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

Title: An act relating to recognizing election day.

Brief Description: Recognizing election day.

Sponsors: Representatives Mena, Ramel, Berry, Reed, Paul, Macri, Farivar, Doglio, Ortiz-Self, Simmons, Peterson, Nance, Ormsby, Fosse, Salahuddin, Reeves, Richards and Hill.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government & Tribal Relations: 1/14/25, 1/17/25 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Designates Election Day as a legislatively recognized day.
- Encourages governmental entities and educational and cultural organizations to recognize Election Day and engage in educational programming.
- Requires the Office of the Secretary of State to create programming and resources for entities to use in their programming.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL RELATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Mena, Chair; Stearns, Vice Chair; Waters, Ranking Minority Member; Chase, Doglio and Farivar.

Staff: Connor Schiff (786-7093).

Background:

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 United States of America has its General Election on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November.

State Holidays.

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 Day; Native American Heritage Day; and Christmas Day. Another 20 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:

Election Day is a legislatively recognized day. Election Day takes place on the first Tuesday after the first Monday of November. The Legislature encourages state governmental entities, local governments, schools and institutions of higher education, and cultural organizations to engage in educational programming related to democracy and voting. The Office of the Secretary of State is required to create Election Day programming and materials for entities to use in planning and structuring their recognitions.

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) Election Day is of statewide and nationwide significance; it should be recognized with the other 20 legislatively recognized days. The right to vote is sacrosanct and many people fought for the right to vote. This day would remind and motivate people to vote. Educational programming would get children excited about voting. It is important to get people excited about voting at an early age. This proposal is a good first step or compromise; Election Day should be recognized as a legal holiday. If it was a holiday, individuals would have more time to vote. A statewide poll shows that Washingtonians support making even-year election days federal holidays.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Sharlett Mena, prime sponsor; Bonny Jo Peterson ; Joe Kunzler; Marcelino Ruiz; Andrew Villeneuve, Northwest Progressive Institute; and Jonathan Pan, Lake Washington High School.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.