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## State Government & Tribal Relations Committee

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### HB 1446

**Brief Description:** Changing the state holiday called Presidents' Day to George Washington's Birthday (observed).

**Sponsors:** Representatives Abell and Eslick.

#### Brief Summary of Bill

- Changes the name of Presidents' Day, a state legal holiday celebrated on the third Monday of February, to George Washington's Birthday (observed).

**Hearing Date:** 2/11/25

**Staff:** Desiree Omli (786-7105).

#### Background:

George Washington was born on February 22, 1732, in Virginia. Although he is most well-known for being the first president of the United States, having taken the oath of office on April 30, 1789, George Washington had many accomplishments. At 16 years old he helped survey Shenandoah lands for Thomas, Lord Fairfax who became George Washington's mentor and was instrumental in Washington's rise to political and social prominence. At 17 years old, Washington was appointed as the county surveyor for the County of Culpeper.

George Washington's military career began in 1753 when Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia selected Washington, in part due to his experience surveying various lands on the frontier, to be the British emissary to the French frontier. He was sent to navigate the challenging landscape and deliver an ultimatum to the French ordering them to retreat from Ohio Valley. George

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Washington would shortly thereafter become Lieutenant Colonel of the Virginia Regiment. The first skirmishes he fought during the months that followed was the beginning of what would later become the French and Indian War.

Growing frustrated with British regulations, George Washington voiced his resistance to British control. In 1775 George Washington was elected Commander in Chief of the Continental Army and led troops in the American Revolution. After the war, George Washington became a prime mover in the steps leading to the Constitutional Convention in 1787. When the new Constitution was ratified, the Electoral College unanimously elected George Washington as President. George Washington died at Mount Vernon on December 14, 1799.

In 1879 February 22 was named Washington's Birthday and made a federal holiday. In 1968 Monday Holiday Law became law to provide uniform annual observances of certain public holidays on Mondays which changed the observance of Washington's Birthday from February 22 to the third Monday in February. Although the federal holiday is widely known as "Presidents' Day," federal law did not change the name and the holiday remains Washington's Birthday. However, Washington's Birthday can never fall on his actual birthday because the third Monday in February cannot fall any later than February 21.

The State of Washington recognizes the third Monday of February as Presidents' Day—one of 11 paid state holidays that recognizes an event or time of remembrance. The purpose of this day is to celebrate Abraham Lincoln's and George Washington's birthday.

**Summary of Bill:**

The name of the state legal holiday celebrated on the third Monday of February is changed to George Washington's Birthday (observed).

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 10, 2025.

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