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HOUSE BILL 2709

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State of Washington

69th Legislature

2026 Regular Session

By Representatives Salahuddin, Zahn, Ryu, Duerr, Cortes, Parshley, Obras, Bergquist, and Ormsby

Read first time 01/30/26. Referred to Committee on State Government & Tribal Relations.

1 AN ACT Relating to recognizing Diwali and Bandi Chhor Divas; and  
2 reenacting and amending RCW 1.16.050.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 **Sec. 1.** RCW 1.16.050 and 2025 c 58 s 1001 and 2025 c 30 s 1 are  
5 each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

6 (1) The following are state legal holidays:

7 (a) Sunday;

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

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

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

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

15 (f) The nineteenth day of June, recognized as Juneteenth, a day  
16 of remembrance for the day the African slaves learned of their  
17 freedom;

18 (g) The fourth day of July, the anniversary of the Declaration of  
19 Independence;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 hardship shall have the meaning established in rule by the office of  
2 financial management under RCW 43.41.109.

3 (4) If any of the state legal holidays specified in this section  
4 are also federal legal holidays but observed on different dates, only  
5 the state legal holidays are recognized as a paid legal holiday for  
6 employees of the state and its political subdivisions. However, for  
7 port districts and the law enforcement and public transit employees  
8 of municipal corporations, either the federal or the state legal  
9 holiday is recognized as a paid legal holiday, but in no case may  
10 both holidays be recognized as a paid legal holiday for employees.

11 (5) Whenever any state legal holiday:

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

14 (b) Falls upon a Saturday, the preceding Friday is the legal  
15 holiday.

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

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

24 (a) The eleventh day of January, recognized as human trafficking  
25 awareness day;

26 (b) The thirteenth day of January, recognized as Korean American  
27 day;

28 (c) The date corresponding with the second new moon following the  
29 winter solstice, or the third new moon following the winter solstice  
30 should an intercalary month intervene, recognized as the lunar new  
31 year;

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

34 (e) The nineteenth day of February, recognized as civil liberties  
35 day of remembrance;

36 (f) The ninth day of March, recognized as Billy Frank Jr. day;

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

39 (h) The thirty-first day of March, recognized as Cesar Chavez  
40 day;

1 (i) The ninth day of April, recognized as former prisoner of war  
2 recognition day;

3 (j) The tenth day of April, recognized as Dolores Huerta day;

4 (k) The sixteenth day of April, recognized as Mother Joseph day;

5 (l) The fifteenth day of May, recognized as water safety day;

6 (m) The twenty-seventh day of July, recognized as national Korean  
7 war veterans armistice day;

8 (n) The seventh day of August, recognized as purple heart  
9 recipient recognition day;

10 (o) The fourth day of September, recognized as Marcus Whitman  
11 day;

12 (p) The fourth Saturday of September, recognized as public lands  
13 day;

14 (q) The second Sunday in October, recognized as Washington state  
15 children's day;

16 (r) The twelfth day of October, recognized as Columbus day;

17 (s) The seventh day of December, recognized as Pearl Harbor  
18 remembrance day;

19 (t) The eighteenth day of December, recognized as blood donor  
20 day;

21 (u) The first day of the tenth month of the Islamic calendar,  
22 which is lunar-cycle based and shifts by approximately 10 to 11 days  
23 each year, commonly called Eid al-Fitr; (~~and~~)

24 (v) The tenth day of the twelfth month of the Islamic calendar,  
25 which is lunar-cycle based and shifts by approximately 10 to 11 days  
26 each year, commonly called Eid al-Adha; and

27 (w) The new moon day of the Hindu lunisolar month of Kartik,  
28 which shifts by approximately 11 days each year, commonly called  
29 Diwali and Bandi Chhor Divas.

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