

Date of Hearing: June 22, 2016

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
Patrick O'Donnell, Chair  
SB 616 (Huff) – As Amended January 4, 2016

**SENATE VOTE:** 40-0

**SUBJECT:** Public schools: Asian Lunar New Year's Day

**SUMMARY:** Encourages all public schools and educational institutions to conduct culturally appropriate activities and exercises observing the Asian Lunar New Year and requires the Governor to annually proclaim the date corresponding with the start of the lunar calendar as Asian Lunar New Year's Day. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Makes findings and declarations relative to the significance of the Asian Lunar New Year.
- 2) Designates the date corresponding with the start of the Asian lunar calendar of each year as set apart as Asian Lunar New Year's Day, a day having special significance.
- 3) Encourages all public schools and educational institutions to conduct culturally appropriate activities and exercises observing the Asian Lunar New Year on Lunar New Year's Day.
- 4) Requires the Governor to annually designate the date corresponding with the start of the lunar calendar as Asian Lunar New Year's Day.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Designates a number of days as days of special significance to the public schools and educational institutions, and encourages them to observe that day and to conduct suitable commemorative exercises. Those recognizing individuals are John Muir Day (April 21), Harvey Milk Day (May 22), Fred Korematsu Day (January 30), Ronald Reagan Day (February 6), and Ed Roberts Day (January 23).
- 2) Requires public schools to close on a number of holidays, including January 1, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Lincoln Day, Washington Day, Memorial Day, July 4, Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, December 25, all days appointed by the Governor or the President of the United States for a public fast, thanksgiving or holiday, and any other day designated as a holiday by the governing board of the school district.
- 3) Requires, for some specified holidays for which schools are required to close (Dr. Martin Luther King Day, Lincoln Day, Washington Day), that schools conduct exercises in commemoration.
- 4) Authorizes public schools to close on two other days if the governing board, pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement, agrees to close schools for that purpose. These days are César Chávez (March 31) and Native American Day (fourth Friday in September).
- 5) Requires public schools to remain open on specified days (unless otherwise closed to mark a holiday by decision of the governing board), and to celebrate the significance of those days

with appropriate commemorative exercises. These days are the anniversary of the adoption of the U.S. Constitution, the birthdays of Luther Burbank (March 7) and Susan B. Anthony (February 15), and the death of Crispus Attucks (March 5).

- 6) Requires the State Board of Education to ensure that state curriculum on César Chávez and the history of the farm labor movement in the United States include information on the role of immigrants, including Filipino Americans, in that movement.
- 7) Designates October 25th of each year as Larry Itliong Day, a day of special significance, and requires the Governor to annually proclaim October 25th of each year as Larry Itliong Day. Encourages all public schools and educational institutions to observe this day and conduct exercises remembering the life and contributions of Larry Itliong.

**FISCAL EFFECT:** This bill is keyed non-fiscal.

**COMMENTS:**

***Asian Lunar New Year.*** The Asian Lunar New Year typically occurs in late January or early February and is a significant cultural event for Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and some other Asian ethnic groups. The San Francisco Unified School District closes its schools in observance of the lunar new year, and this year the New York City Department of Education did the same. This bill encourages, but does not require, public schools and educational institutions to conduct exercises celebrating the occasion.

***Similar bills.*** This bill is substantially similar to AB 2598 (Ting), which was approved by this Committee on April 20<sup>th</sup>. AB 2598 encourages all public schools and educational institutions to conduct culturally appropriate activities and exercises observing the Lunar New Year, and requires the Governor to annually proclaim the date corresponding with the start of the lunar calendar as Lunar New Year's Day. ***The Committee may wish to consider*** whether it should approve two measures which are substantially similar.

***Related legislation.*** AB 2598 (Ting) of this Session, which was approved by this Committee on April 20<sup>th</sup>, encourages all public schools and educational institutions to conduct culturally appropriate activities and exercises observing the Lunar New Year and requires the Governor to annually proclaim the date corresponding with the start of the lunar calendar as Lunar New Year's Day. This bill is pending in the Senate Education Committee.

AB 7 (Bonta), Chapter 29, Statutes of 2015, designates October 25th of each year as Larry Itliong Day, a day of special significance, and requires the Governor to annually proclaim October 25th of each year as Larry Itliong Day. Encourages all public schools and educational institutions to observe this day and conduct related exercises remembering the life and contributions of Larry Itliong.

**REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

**Support**

Asian Pacific Islander American Public Affairs Association (sponsor)

Asians for Lunar New Year Group (sponsor)

Chinese American Equalization Association (sponsor)

Joint Chinese University Alumni Association of Southern California (sponsor)  
Silicon Valley Chinese Association Foundation (sponsor)  
The Orange Club Political Action Committee (sponsor)

**Opposition**

None on file

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