
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Benjamin Allen, Chair

2017 - 2018 Regular

Bill No: AB 2644 **Hearing Date:** June 27, 2018
Author: Reyes
Version: March 20, 2018
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** No
Consultant: Jennifer Chase

Subject: Dolores Huerta Day.

SUMMARY

This bill designates April 10 as Dolores Huerta Day and encourages public schools to recognize it as a day of special significance.

BACKGROUND

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, including Ronald Reagan Day (February 6), John Muir Day (April 21), and Harvey Milk Day (May 22). (EC § 37222.16, EC § 37222.11, and EC § 37222.13)
- 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, December 25, all days appointed by the Governor or the President of the United States for a public fast, holiday, and any other day designated as a holiday by the governing board of the school district. Existing law requires that for some specified holidays for which schools are required to close (Dr. Martin Luther King Day, Lincoln Day, and Washington Day), schools conduct exercises in commemoration. (EC § 37220)
- 3) 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). (EC § 37220.5 and EC § 37220.7)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Designates April 10 as Dolores Huerta Day, and sets apart that date each year as having special significance.
- 2) Encourages all public schools and educational institutions to observe that date by conducting exercises remembering the life of Dolores Huerta and recognizing her accomplishments and the contributions she made to the state.

- 3) Requires the Governor to annually proclaim April 10 as Dolores Huerta Day.
- 4) Makes legislative findings and declarations pertaining to the accomplishments of Dolores Huerta and her contributions to the labor movement and as a defender of civil rights, equal rights, and dignity for all.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “Existing law proclaims the first week of April as Labor History Week and encourages school districts to commemorate the week with appropriate educational exercises that make pupils aware of the role the labor movement has played in shaping California and the United States. It is only appropriate that we give Dolores Huerta proper recognition for her numerous sacrifices in the name of justice and the labor movement.”
- 2) ***Background on Dolores Huerta.*** Dolores Huerta is widely respected as an activist and labor leader who along with Cesar Chavez, co-founded the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA), the predecessor of the United Farm Workers’ Union (UFW). Huerta served as UFW vice president until 1999. Huerta helped organize the 1965 Delano strike of 5,000 grape workers and was the lead negotiator in the workers’ contract that followed.

Throughout her life, Huerta organized workers, negotiated contracts, advocated for safer working conditions including the elimination of harmful pesticides. She also fought for unemployment and healthcare benefits for agricultural workers. The recipient of many honors, Huerta received the Eleanor Roosevelt Human Rights Award in 1998 and the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2012. As of 2015, she was a board member of the Feminist Majority Foundation, the Secretary-Treasurer Emeritus of the United Farm Workers of America, and the President of the Dolores Huerta Foundation.

- 3) ***Dolores Huerta’s contributions recognized in state’s new History-Social Science framework.*** The state’s History-Social Science Curriculum Framework, adopted by the State Board of Education in 2016, includes content about the contributions of Dolores Huerta in several grades. In second grade, Dolores Huerta is named as a hero whose biography students may study. In the 4th grade California history, and in the 11th grade course, U.S. History and Geography, students may study “how Cesar Chavez, Dolores Huerta, and the United Farm Workers’ movement used nonviolent tactics, educated the general public about the working conditions in agriculture, and worked to improve the lives of farmworkers.”
- 4) ***Days honoring individuals.*** Currently, there are six days named after an individual designated as having special significance, nine days that require the Governor to annually recognize a certain individual, and four state holidays named for an individual.
- 5) ***Related legislation.*** HR 92 (Reyes, 2018) designates April 10 of each year as Dolores Huerta day, and recognizes the accomplishments and contributions of Dolores Huerta. (Pending referral at the Assembly Desk)

AB 7 (Bonta, Chapter 29, Statutes of 2015) required the Governor to annually proclaim October 25 as Larry Itliong Day, designated that date each year as having special significance, and encouraged all public schools and educational institutions to conduct exercises remembering the life of Larry Itliong and the contributions he made to the state.

AB 2269 (Swanson, Chapter 584, Statutes of 2012) deemed the month of May to be Labor History Month, and encouraged school districts to commemorate the month with appropriate educational exercises, as specified.

SB 1373 (Torres, Chapter 1011, Statutes of 1994) required the Governor to annually proclaim March 31 as Cesar Chavez Day, and included March 31, known as Cesar Chavez Day, in the list of state holidays.

SUPPORT

None received

OPPOSITION

None received

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