

Date of Hearing: May 11, 2022

# ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Chris Holden, Chair

AB 1801 (Nazarian) – As Amended April 7, 2022

Policy Committee:	Governmental Organization	Vote:	20 - 0
	Higher Education		12 - 0

Urgency: No      State Mandated Local Program: Yes      Reimbursable: Yes

## SUMMARY:

This bill adds April 24, known as “Genocide Awareness Day,” as a state holiday, with paid time off for public school, California Community College (CCC), California State University (CSU) and State of California employees. This bill requests the University of California (UC) also observe the holiday.

## FISCAL EFFECT:

- 1) By requiring public schools to observe Genocide Awareness Day as a paid holiday, thus incurring related administrative and personnel costs, this bill likely imposes a state-mandated local program with unknown, but definitely significant, costs to the state. To the extent the Commission on State Mandates determines the provisions of this bill create a new program or impose a higher level of service on local education agencies (LEAs), an LEA could claim General Fund reimbursement of those costs. Schools must adjust their academic calendar to meet instructional day minimums and renegotiate collective bargaining agreements.

According to school officials, when holidays fall on Tuesdays or Thursdays, there is a noticeable reduction in attendance on Mondays (for the Tuesday holiday) and Fridays (for the Thursday holiday) due to parents taking four-day weekends. Since public schools are funded by student attendance, if April 24 falls on a Tuesday or Thursday, establishing Genocide Awareness Day could result in reduced school funding.

- 2) Costs of an unknown, but potentially significant, amount to CCC by adding a paid holiday for staff. Additionally, since CCC must provide at least 175 days of instruction, this bill may require changes to attendance accounting and scheduling so CCC can meet instructional day minimums. Regardless, CCC districts would incur administrative costs to update their 2022-23 calendar to reflect the holiday, as most academic calendars are set two years in advance.
- 3) Costs of approximately \$18.7 million to CSU. CSU notes this is the amount that would be paid to employees regardless of whether a new holiday is established, so the direct cost is lost work value. Additionally, paid holidays are outlined in collective bargaining agreements with staff, which would need to be renegotiated. Since April 24 falls within the spring semester, there are also unknown administrative costs to rearrange the academic calendar and potentially lengthen the semester to meet instructional day minimums.

Costs of a proportionate amount to the UC system, if UC follows the holiday request.

- 4) General Fund and special fund costs of an unknown, but definitely significant, amount to provide an additional vacation day for eligible state workers. According to an estimate by the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO), adding a new state holiday would result in approximately \$10 million to \$20 million in annual direct costs to the state for premium pay and overtime to employees who must work on holidays, generally essential workers in 24-hour settings such as correctional facilities or state operations responding to an emergency. Of that amount, approximately \$2 million stems from increased leave liabilities, which are unused vacation or other leave amounts an employee can "cash out" upon separation. For years when the holiday falls on a Saturday, LAO estimates an additional \$74 million in increased leave liabilities (unlike Veterans Day, which is specially adjusted to the preceding Friday when November 11 falls on a Saturday; when a state holiday falls on a Sunday, the holiday is automatically observed the following Monday). LAO also estimates annual salary cost pressures of approximately \$70 million in lost productivity.

#### COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** According to the author, "This bill requires that we take a day as a state to reflect on previous and current acts of genocide, and, through this reflection, we can help prevent further atrocities. Additionally, this gives many with generational trauma recognition of that trauma and an opportunity to heal." This bill is supported by Jewish World Watch.
- 2) **Genocide Awareness.** The author notes that some genocidal acts which are proven to have occurred are "outright denied" and cites the example of the Armenian Genocide. In 2019, the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate passed a resolution recognizing the mass killings of Armenians from 1915 to 1923 as genocide. In 2021, President Biden issued a statement marking the 106<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the massacre's start. According to the author, "Currently, only 31 countries worldwide recognize the genocide – and, therefore, the trauma that Armenians feel today."

AJR 27 (Nazarian), of this legislative session, stated that April 24, 1915, is globally observed and recognized as the commencement of the Armenian Genocide and resolved that April 24, 2022, be recognized as "State of California Day of Commemoration of the 107<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1923." AJR 27 is pending referral by the Senate Rules Committee and many resolutions have been adopted in prior years commemorating this anniversary. This bill establishes Genocide Awareness Day on April 24 as a paid holiday for public school, community college, CSU and state employees and requests UC to follow.

- 3) **Related Legislation.** AB 1655 (Jones-Sawyer) adds June 19, known as "Juneteenth," as a paid state holiday similar to this bill. AB 1655 is pending hearing in this committee.

AB 1872 (Low) adds the day of statewide general elections in even-numbered years as a paid state holiday similar to this bill and eliminates Washington Day (Presidents' Day) as a holiday in those years. AB 1872 is pending on this committee's Suspense file.

AB 2596 (Low) repeals the requirement for the Governor to annually proclaim the Lunar New Year and instead establish the day as a paid state holiday for state employees only. AB 2596 is pending hearing in this committee.