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**SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION**

**Senator Susan Rubio**

**Chair**

**2025 - 2026 Regular**

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**Bill No:** AB 1841 **Hearing Date:** 6/23/2026  
**Author:** Ramos, et al.  
**Version:** 2/11/2026 Introduced  
**Urgency:** No **Fiscal:** Yes  
**Consultant:** Brian Duke

**SUBJECT:** State holidays: Native American Day

**DIGEST:** This bill, upon determination by the California Department of Human Resources (CalHR) that sufficient funds exist to provide a state holiday to all state employees, entitles state employees to a holiday on the fourth Friday in September, known as “Native American Day,” as specified.

**ANALYSIS:**

Existing law:

- 1) States that it is the policy of the state that the workweek of the state employee is 40 hours, and the workday of state employees is eight hours, except as specified.
- 2) Provides that all state employees are entitled to the following holidays: January 1, the third Monday in January, the third Monday in February, March 31, the last Monday in May, July 4, the first Monday in September, November 11, Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, December 25, the day chosen by an employee as a personal holiday, and every day appointed by the Governor of this state for a public fast, thanksgiving, or holiday.
- 3) Authorizes any state employee to elect to receive eight hours of holiday credit for the date known as “Lunar New Year,” the date known as “Genocide Remembrance Day,” the date known as “Diwali,” the date known as “Juneteenth,” or the date known as “Native American Day,” in lieu of receiving eight hours of personal holiday credit, as specified.
- 4) Authorizes a state employee to elect to receive eight hours of holiday credit for observance of a holiday or ceremony of the state employee’s religion, culture,

or heritage in lieu of receiving eight hours of personal holiday credit, as specified.

- 5) Entitles every employee, upon completion of six months of his or her initial probationary period in state service, to one personal holiday per fiscal year, as specified.
- 6) Establishes the fourth Friday in September, known as “Native American Day,” as a holiday in this state.

This bill:

- 1) Provides, upon CalHR’s determination that sufficient funds exist to provide a holiday for all state employees, all state employees shall be entitled to a holiday on the fourth Friday in September, known as “Native American Day,” in lieu of the personal holiday.
- 2) Authorizes any state bargaining unit to negotiate to receive this day as a paid holiday as a part of their memorandum of understanding (MOU).

## **Background**

*Author Statement.* According to the author’s office, “Native American Day is a celebration honoring California’s First People, their cultures, their achievements, and their resilience after centuries of violence and discrimination. It serves as a reminder that while the state has taken meaningful steps toward addressing the historical injustices committed against Native communities, the work of healing the deep scars that remain has only begun. Establishing Native American Day as an official state holiday affirms the state’s commitment to building a long and meaningful relationship with its sovereign tribes. It acknowledges that despite years of displacement and violence, California’s First People remain and will continue to be an essential part of the state’s history and culture.”

*Native American Day.* Among other things, information provided by the author states that, “[under] Section 19853 of the Gov. Code, Native American Day, the 4th Friday of September, is listed as one of the available holidays state employees may observe using their yearly allowance of personal holidays. While this policy acknowledges Native American Day as a holiday and allows state employees the option to observe it with pay, the policy does not adequately emphasize the significance of this day to California's history and culture. In 2021, the California Legislature passed AB 855 (Chapter 283, Statutes of 2021) making Native American Day a paid judicial holiday and removing Columbus Day from its

approved list of observed holidays. This change was part of the Judicial Branch’s ongoing efforts to modernize itself and provide recognition of the importance of diversity within the court system. However, while the Judicial Branch now formally observes Native American Day, the remainder of state government does not. Under current law, most state employees may observe the day only by using a personal holiday, which results in an uneven recognition and inconsistent treatment of this important cultural holiday for California tribes. This bill is needed to correct that disparity and ensure that Native American Day is truly recognized uniformly across all branches of state government.”

*California Department of Human Resources.* CalHR oversees a wide range of matters related to employee salaries and benefits, job classifications, civil rights, training, exams, recruitment and retention. For most employees, many of these matters are determined through the collective bargaining process managed by CalHR. CalHR maintains an [internet website](#) where employees can find information regarding state holidays including dates and eligibility requirements.

### **Prior/Related Legislation**

AB 2017 (Haney, 2026) proposes to add the first day of the month of Shawwal in the Islamic lunar calendar, known as “Eid al-Fitr,” and the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month of Dhu al-Hijjah in the Islamic lunar calendar, known as “Eid al-Adha” to the existing list of state holidays, as specified. (Pending in the Senate Governmental Organization Committee)

AB 2294 (Ta, 2026) designates Sylvia Mendez Day as a state holiday, as specified. (Pending on the Senate Floor)

AB 2455 (Haney, 2026) requires the Governor to annually proclaim May 17 as Bruce Lee Day, and designates and sets apart that date each year as having special significance, as specified. (Pending in Engrossing and Enrolling)

AB 989 (Ramos, 2025) proposed to remove the “fourth Friday in September, known as Native American Day, as an elective holiday for state employees and, instead, make it a paid state holiday for those employees. (Held on the Assembly Appropriations Committee Suspense File)

AB 855 (Ramos, Chapter 283, Statutes of 2021) replaced Columbus Day with Native American Day as an approved judicial holiday.

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

**SUPPORT:**

California Federation of Labor Unions, AFL-CIO  
California Native Vote Project  
California Rural Indian Health Board, INC.  
Habematolel Pomo of Upper Lake  
Morongo Band of Mission Indians  
Office of the Mayor - City of San Bernardino  
Service Employees International Union, Local 1000  
Wilton Rancheria  
Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation  
Yurok Tribe

**OPPOSITION:**

None received

**ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT:** In support of the bill, the California Native American Vote Project writes that, “[a]s an organization dedicated to advancing civic engagement and political power in Native American communities across California, the California Native Vote Project works to ensure Native voices are heard, respected, and represented at all levels of government. Recognizing Native American Day as an official state holiday aligns with our mission to uplift Native identities, cultures, and histories, and reflects an ongoing commitment to equity, visibility, and tribal sovereignty.”

Further, “AB 1841 would make Native American Day, the fourth Friday in September, an official paid holiday for state employees. We believe this bill elevates the importance of this historic day, not just for native people, but all Californians. Native American Day is a celebration of the resilience of California’s First People and their struggle for survival. More importantly, it serves as a reminder to all that there is still more work to be done to help heal the scars of violence and discrimination that many tribes bare to this day.

And finally, “[i]n addition to its symbolic importance, Native American Day would serve as an opportunity for the public to learn more about California’s history. Formal recognition would encourage communities to dedicate time to learning about the people who inhabited these lands long before it was ever a state.”