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## SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

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<b>Bill No:</b>	AB 2455	<b>Hearing Date:</b>	June 3, 2026
<b>Author:</b>	Haney		
<b>Version:</b>	February 20, 2026		
<b>Urgency:</b>	No	<b>Fiscal:</b>	No
<b>Consultant:</b>	Michelle Nguyen		

**Subject:** Bruce Lee Day.

**NOTE:** This bill has been referred to the Committees on Education and *Governmental Organization*. A “do pass” motion should include referral to the Committee on *Governmental Organization*.

### SUMMARY

This bill designates May 17 of each year as a day having special significance called Bruce Lee Day, and this bill encourages all public schools and educational institutions on Bruce Lee Day to conduct exercises remembering the life of Bruce Lee, recognizing his accomplishments, and familiarizing pupils with the contributions he made to the state. This bill also requires the Governor to annually proclaim May 17 as Bruce Lee Day.

### BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Indicates that for each day designated and set apart as a day having special significance, all public schools and educational institutions are encouraged to observe and conduct suitable commemorative exercises. Indicates that it is the intent of the Legislature that the commemorative exercises be integrated into the regular school program and be conducted by the school or institution within the amount of time otherwise budgeted for educational programs. (Education Code (EC) § 37222)
- 2) Designates a number of days as days having special significance, including the following days recognizing specific individuals: John Muir Day (April 21), Harvey Milk Day (May 22), Ronald Reagan Day (February 6), and Dolores Huerta Day (April 10). (EC § 37222.10 – 37222.21)
- 3) 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 designated by the Governor and President for a public fast, thanksgiving, or holiday, any special or limited holidays on which the Governor provides that the schools close, and any other day designated as a holiday by the governing board of a local school district. (EC § 37220)

- 4) 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. (EC § 37220)
- 5) Authorizes public schools to close on other days if the governing board, pursuant to a memorandum of understanding reached through collective bargaining, agrees to close schools for that purpose. These days are Cesar Chavez Day (March 31), Native American Day (fourth Friday in September), Genocide Remembrance Day (April 24), Diwali (the 15th day of the month of Kartik in the Hindu lunar calendar). (EC § 37220.5 and 37220.7)
- 6) Requires public schools to remain open on specified days—unless otherwise closed due to a governing board of a school district designating a day as a holiday—and to celebrate the significance of those days with appropriate commemorative exercises. These days are the anniversary of the adoption of the United States Constitution, the birthdays of Luther Burbank (March 7) and Susan B. Anthony (February 15), and the death of Crispus Attucks (March 5). (EC § 37221)

## ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Designates May 17 of each year as a day having special significance called Bruce Lee Day, which means that all public schools and educational institutions are encouraged to observe that day and to conduct suitable commemorative exercises.
- 2) Encourages all public schools and educational institutions on Bruce Lee Day to conduct exercises remembering the life of Bruce Lee, recognizing his accomplishments, and familiarizing pupils with the contributions he made to the state.
- 3) Requires the Governor to annually proclaim May 17 as Bruce Lee Day.
- 4) Makes finding and declarations related to the life of Bruce Lee as a trailblazing Chinese American martial artist, actor, and filmmaker; for his contributions to the Chinese American community, including his influence in the San Francisco Bay Area and other regions of the state; his status as the first Asian American actor to play a leading role in a Hollywood movie; and his commitment to civil rights, racial solidarity, and community.

## STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “many Asian Americans report feeling marginalized or excluded in American society. According to a 2021 Pew Research Center survey, approximately one-third of Asian Americans say they have been subjected to racial slurs or jokes, and many report feeling treated as “foreigners” regardless of how long they or their families have lived in the United States.

During Bruce Lee's lifetime, these barriers were even more pronounced. Asian actors were often limited to stereotypical or minor roles, rarely appearing as leading figures on screen. Lee's success fundamentally challenged those norms, opening doors for generations of Asian American performers and creators.

Despite his profound cultural influence and his roots in San Francisco, California has never formally recognized Bruce Lee's contributions to representation and cultural progress. ... [This bill recognizes] one of the most influential Chinese Americans in California history."

- 2) ***State has designated multiple days as having special significance.*** For days that the state has designated and set apart as having special significance, all public schools and educational institutions are encouraged to observe that day and to conduct suitable commemorative exercises. Currently, the state has designated a dozen separate days as having special significance. These days of special significance differ from holidays for which all public schools are required to close, as well as days for which a school's governing board makes a local decision to close. If this bill is to be enacted, all public schools and educational institutions would be encouraged to observe Bruce Lee Day and to conduct suitable commemorative exercises in recognition of Bruce Lee's life and accomplishments.
- 3) ***Other dates recognizing Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities.*** The state has recognized the cultural heritage and contributions of AAPI communities by designating and setting apart other days as having special significance to the AAPI communities, including Lunar New Year and the Fred Korematsu Day of Civil Liberties and the Constitution, and the state recognizes that public schools may be closed for Diwali, which is on the 15th day of the month of Kartik in the Hindu lunar calendar of each year. In addition, the Governor issues a proclamation every May declaring the month as Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month.
- 4) ***Arguments in support.*** According to a letter submitted to this committee from Asian Americans Advancing Justice Southern California, "According to a survey by the Pew Research Center, about one-third of Asian Americans have reported feeling treated as "foreigners" and have been subjected to racist rhetoric. Additionally, the AANHPI community faced heightened levels of anti-Asian hate during the COVID pandemic. Approximately 4 in 10 U.S.-born Asian Americans know of an Asian individual who was threatened or attacked since the pandemic first began.

During Bruce Lee's lifetime, these challenges were even more significant. Asian American representation in the film and media space was very limited to minor roles or roles that paint him as the villain. Lee's success challenged these stereotypes, paving the way for generations of Asian American performers and artists. Despite Lee's impact on California, the state has never formally recognized his contributions. This bill will be the first bill in our state to honor a Chinese American."

According to a letter submitted to this committee from the San Francisco Chinese Chamber of Commerce, "Bruce Lee was more than a martial artist or film icon. He

represented confidence, discipline, innovation, and cultural pride at a time when Asian Americans were often overlooked or misrepresented in mainstream American society. Through his work, he helped redefine how Asian Americans were viewed not only in entertainment, but also in broader public life. His influence transcended generations, cultures, and borders, making him one of the most recognizable cultural ambassadors of Chinese and Asian heritage in modern history.

Bruce Lee also holds a unique and deeply personal connection to San Francisco's Chinese-American community. He was born at Chinese Hospital in Chinatown, an institution founded in the 1800s to serve immigrant communities during a time when Chinese Americans faced widespread discrimination and limited access to healthcare. The Chinese Chamber of Commerce of San Francisco was among the founding community institutions that helped establish and support Chinese Hospital, making this recognition especially meaningful and historically significant to our organization and community.

California is home to one of the largest and most diverse Asian American communities in the nation. Recognizing Bruce Lee's legacy reflects the values of inclusion, perseverance, and cultural exchange that continue to shape our state. Designating "Bruce Lee Day" would also provide an opportunity for schools, community organizations, and future generations to learn about the historical challenges Asian Americans faced and the contributions they have made to California's cultural and economic fabric."

5) ***Related and Prior Legislation.***

AB 268 (Kalra, Chapter 358, Statutes of 2025) adds Diwali to the list of state holidays, authorizes public schools and educational institutions throughout the state to close on Diwali, and authorizes state employees to elect to take specified leave in recognition of Diwali.

AB 2596 (Low, Chapter 792, Statutes of 2022) recognizes Lunar New Year as a state holiday and authorizes eligible state employees to elect to receive eight hours of holiday credit for that date in lieu of receiving eight hours of personal credit, as specified.

AB 1775 (Furutani, Chapter 241, Statutes of 2010) designates January 30 of each year as Fred Korematsu Day of Civil Liberties and the Constitution, a day having special significance.

**SUPPORT**

Chinese Historical Society of America (co-sponsor)  
Stand with Asians (co-sponsor)  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice Southern California  
Asian Law Alliance  
Asian Leaders Alliance  
Asian Pacific Islander Council of San Francisco  
ASIAN, Inc.

BeChinatown  
Center for Asian American Media  
Chinese Chamber of Commerce of San Francisco  
Chinese Hospital  
Oakland Chinatown Chamber of Commerce  
Rose Pak Community Fund  
San Francisco Eastern Neighborhoods Democratic Club  
San Francisco Travel Association  
Sunset Chinese Cultural District  
Teamsters Local 665  
The 1990 Institute  
The Asian American Foundation  
United Playaz

**OPPOSITION**

None received

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