
SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION

Senator Susan Rubio

Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No: AB 2455 **Hearing Date:** 6/9/2026
Author: Haney, et al.
Version: 2/20/2026 Introduced
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** No
Consultant: Brian Duke

SUBJECT: Bruce Lee Day

DIGEST: This bill requires the Governor to annually proclaim May 17 as Bruce Lee Day and designates that date as having special significance, as specified.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Requires the Governor to proclaim certain days each year for specified reasons.
- 2) Designates particular days each year as having special significance and encourages all public schools and educational institutions to observe those days and to conduct suitable commemorative exercises on those days, as specified.
- 3) States the intent of the Legislature that the exercises encouraged on days of special significance 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.

This bill:

- 1) Designates May 17 of each year, and sets it apart as, Bruce Lee Day – a day having special significance, as specified.
- 2) Encourages, on Bruce Lee Day, all public schools and educational institutions to conduct exercises remembering the life of Bruce Lee, recognizing his accomplishments, and familiarizing pupils with the contributions he made to this state.
- 3) Requires the Governor to annually proclaim May 17 as Bruce Lee Day.

4) Includes related Legislative findings and declarations.

Background

Author Statement. According to the author's office, "Bruce Lee was a symbol of pride, resilience, and possibility for generations who rarely saw themselves reflected with strength and dignity. From his birth in San Francisco to his global influence, Lee represents the creativity, resilience, and cultural diversity that defines our state. By creating Bruce Lee Day, California is honoring not only a global icon but also the first Chinese American to be recognized with a day in state law. This is about telling every young person who feels unseen that their story, their culture, and their dreams belong in the heart of California's history."

Days of Special Significance. Existing law establishes specific dates that are designated and set apart as a day having special significance. On those days, all public schools and educational institutions are encouraged to observe that day and to conduct suitable commemorative exercises.

The Senate Committee on Education analysis of this bill notes that:

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.

Current days set apart as being a day of special designation include:

- a) The second Wednesday in May as the Day of the Teacher.
- b) April 21 as John Muir Day.
- c) April 6 as California Poppy Day.
- d) May 22 as Harvey Milk Day.
- e) March 30 as Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day.
- f) January 30 as Fred Korematsu Day of Civil Liberties and the Constitution.
- g) February 6 as Ronald Reagan Day.
- h) January 23 as Ed Roberts Day.
- i) October 25 as Larry Itliong Day.
- j) The date corresponding with the second new moon following the winter solstice, or the third new moon following the winter solstice should an intercalary month intervene, as Lunar New Year.

- k) April 10 as Dolores Huerta Day.
- l) September 11 as September 11th Remembrance Day.

This bill requires the Governor to annually proclaim May 17 as Bruce Lee Day and designates that date and sets it apart as having special significance. This bill encourages all public schools and educational institutions to observe that date by conducting exercises remembering the life of Burce Lee and recognizing his accomplishments and the contributions he made to the state. May 17, 1959, is the date that Bruce Lee returned to the United States at the age of 18 to begin what became an iconic career in American martial arts and showbusiness.

Bruce Lee. In 1939, Lee Hoi-Chuen, a Cantonese Opera singer, and his wife Grace Ho, traveled to California for an international opera tour in San Francisco's famous Chinatown neighborhood. While there, Grace Ho gave birth to Bruce Lee on November 27, 1940. The United States long standing *jus soli* citizenship laws resulted in his birth allowing him to claim United States citizenship where he would go on to become one of the most influential martial artists and cultural figures of the twentieth century.

When Bruce Lee's family returned to Hong Kong in 1941, they quickly found themselves in unexpected hardships as Japan, amid World War II, launched a surprise attack on the island and ruled the city for the following four years. While in Hong Kong Bruce Lee, also known as Lee Jun Fan and Lee Siu Loong, appeared in more than 20 films as a child actor and studied the Wing Chun style of gun fu under the Grandmaster Ip Man. The Lee's family's ancestral roots trace to Foshan in the Guangdong Province, a region historically linked to the overseas Chinese diaspora and commemorated locally as Bruce Lee's ancestral home.

At the age of 18, Bruce Lee returned to the United States. First to San Francisco followed by five years in Seattle. In 1964 Bruce Lee moved to Oakland where he co-founded a Jun Fan martial arts studio and developed his philosophy of Jeet Kune Do. By the late 1960s, Bruce Lee's skill and charisma led to opportunities in Hollywood. He was cast as Kato in the 1966 television series "The Green Hornet," making him one of the first Asian American actors to costar in an American television series.

Bruce Lee achieved international fame through films such as "Enter the Dragon," still regarded as one of the most influential martial arts films ever made. The film established Bruce Lee as the first Asian American actor to headline a major Hollywood motion picture and helped introduce martial arts cinema to mainstream American audiences. Many of the most prominent modern or current martial arts actors have acknowledged Bruce Lee's influence, including Jackie Chan and

Donnie Yen. Bruce Lee's films are known for popularizing the side kick, roundhouse kick, grappling, spinning heel kick, armbar, weapons such as the nunchaku, and his distinctive kiai. He was also known for popularizing the one-inch punch and the two-finger push-up.

Los Angeles Lakers star Kobe Bryant incorporated fundamentals of Bruce Lee's martial arts into his basketball training. According to an [South China Morning Post](#) article, "the one thing – among many – that I have learned from Bruce's philosophy of Jeet Kune Do is being able to adapt," Bryant said. "It's about having the fundamental skills available so that you can react to any situation."

In July of 1973, Bruce Lee passed away at the age of 32. He is buried in Lake View Cemetery, in Seattle. Bruce Lee continues to be one of the most influential martial artists of all time, and a pop culture icon of the nineteen hundreds, having been named one of the "[Time 100 Persons Of The Century](#)."

Prior/Related Legislation

SR 97 (Wahab, Enrolled, 2026) commends Asian and Pacific Islander Americans for their notable accomplishments and contributions to California, as specified.

AB 1841 (Ramos, 2026) entitles state employees to a holiday on the 4th Friday in September, known as "Native American Day," among other provisions. (Pending in the Senate Governmental Organization Committee)

AB 2017 (Haney, 2026) adds "Eid al-Fitr" and "Eid al-Adha" to the list of state holidays, as specified. (Pending in the Senate Governmental Organization Committee)

AB 2156 (Rivas, Chapter, Statutes of 2026) designates May 31 as Farmworkers Day and requires the Governor to annually proclaim March 31 as Farmworkers Day.

AB 2294 (Ta, 2026) designates Sylvia Mendez Day as a state holiday, as specified. (Pending in the Senate Governmental Organization Committee)

AB 268 (Kalra, Chapter 358, Statutes of 2025) added Diwali to the list of state holidays, authorized public schools and community colleges to close on Diwali, and authorized state employees to elect to take specified leave in recognition of Diwali.

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

SUPPORT:

Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Southern California
Asian Law Alliance
Asian Leaders Alliance
Asian Pacific Islander Council of San Francisco
Asian, INC.
BeChinatown
Board of Supervisors for the City and County of San Francisco
Bruce Lee Foundation
California Asian Pacific Chamber of Commerce
Center for Asian American Media
Chinatown Service Center
Chinese Chamber of Commerce of San Francisco
Chinese Culture Foundation of San Francisco
Chinese Historical Society of America
Chinese Hospital
Contemporary Asian Theatre Scene
Empire Distribution INC.
Oakland Chinatown Chamber of Commerce
One Apia Nevada
Rose Pak Community Fund
San Francisco Eastern Neighborhoods Democratic Club
San Francisco Travel Association
Stand With Asians
Sunset Chinese Cultural District
Teamsters Local 665
The 1990 Institute
The Asian American Foundation
United Playaz
#makeitbay

OPPOSITION:

None received

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT: In support of the bill, the Bruce Lee Foundation writes that, “[r]egardless of how long Asian Americans have lived in the United States, they continue to face exclusion in American society. California is home to 7.2 million Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (AANHPI). Despite making up a major population of our state, these communities continue to face barriers including racial discrimination in exclusion. 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.”

Further, “[d]uring 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 them as the villain. Lee’s success challenged these stereotypicals, 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.”

And finally, “AB 2455 honors Bruce Lee’s achievements as a pioneering Chinese American leader who paved the way for greater cultural representation in the entertainment industry. This bill recognizes his legacy of inclusion and cultural exchange and ensures his influence is remembered across the state.”

DUAL REFERRAL: Senate Education Committee (7-0) and Senate Governmental Organization Committee