

Date of Hearing: March 15, 2017

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION

Adam Gray, Chair

AB 88 (Nazarian) – As Introduced January 9, 2017

SUBJECT: Nowrūz Day

SUMMARY: Requires the Governor to annually to proclaim the day of the astronomical Northward equinox, which usually occurs on March 20 or the following day, as “Nowrūz Day”.

EXISTING LAW:

1) Requires the Governor to Proclaim the following days each year as follows:

- a) September 28 as “Cabrillo Day.”
- b) January 15 as “Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Day.”
- c) March 7 as “Arbor Day.”
- d) February 19 as “A Day of Remembrance: Japanese American Evacuation.”
- e) Fourth Friday in September as “Native American Day.”
- f) First Sunday in October as “Stepparents Day.”
- g) April 21 as “John Muir Day.”
- h) March 30 as “Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day.”
- i) December 7 as “Pearl Harbor Day.”
- j) March 31 as “Cesar Chavez Day.”
- k) Month of February as “Black History Month.”
- l) Third Saturday in June as “Juneteenth National Freedom Day: A Day of Observance.”
- m) April 24 as “California Day of Remembrance of the Armenian Genocide.”
- n) May 22 as “Harvey Milk Day.”
- o) January 30 as “Fred Korematsu Day of Civil Liberties and the Constitution.”
- p) February 6 as “Ronald Reagan Day.”
- q) January 23 as “Ed Roberts Day.”
- r) October 25 as “Larry Itliong Day.”
- s) First Friday in May as “Space Day”

FISCAL EFFECT: Keyed non-fiscal by Legislative Counsel.

COMMENTS:

Background: Nowruz is the name of the Iranian New Year, also known as the Persian New Year, which is celebrated worldwide by the Iranian peoples and other ethno-linguistic groups. It has been celebrated for over 3,000 years in Western Asia, Central Asia, the Caucasus, the Black Sea Basin and the Balkans. It marks the first day of the first month in the Iranian calendar.

Nowruz is the day of the vernal equinox, and marks the beginning of spring in the Northern Hemisphere. It usually occurs on March 20 or the following day, depending on where it is observed. Although having Iranian and religious origins, Nowruz has been celebrated by people from diverse ethno-linguistic communities for thousands of years. It is a secular holiday for most celebrants, but remains a holy day for some.

Purpose of the bill: According to the author, AB 88 proclaims the first day of spring—usually on March 20th or 21st—as Nowruz Day. Nowruz, otherwise known as Persian New Year, commemorates spring and extends best wishes for a peaceful and prosperous Nowruz to all Californians. It gives everyone—regardless of ethnic, cultural, religious, or economic background—an opportunity to celebrate and move forward with hope for a prosperous new year. The day’s focus on reconciliation and neighborliness contribute to cultural diversity and cooperation among people from different communities and backgrounds. This message of celebration and hope is especially important at a time when we’re facing anti-immigrant sentiment from the federal government. While the California Legislature has celebrated Nowruz for the past three years, it is time we pass a bill to proclaim March 20th or March 21st as Nowruz Day, to show solidarity with our Iranian community.

The Author further notes that the largest number of Iranians outside of Iran reside in California – over half of all Iranian immigrants live in California, about 157,225, according to the 2010 Census. Additionally, The Small Business Administration conducted a 2008 study that found Iranian immigrants to be among the top twenty immigrant groups with the highest rate of business ownership, contributing substantially to the U.S. and California economies.

Prior/Related Legislation: ACR 19 (Nazarian) of 2017/2018 Session. Recognizes the Persian New Year celebration. (Pending in Assembly Rules Committee)

ACR 91 (Nazarian), Res. Chapter 22, Statutes of 2014. Recognizes the Persian New Year celebration.

ACR 2 (Nazarian), Res. Chapter 29, Statutes of 2015. Recognizes the Persian New Year celebration.

ACR 111 (Nazarian), Res. Chapter 40, Statutes of 2016. Recognizes the Persian New Year celebration.

AB 7 (Bonta), Chapter 29, Statutes of 2015. Requires the Governor to annually proclaim October 25 as Larry Itliong Day.

AB 1775 (Furutani), Chapter 241, Statutes of 2010. Requires the Governor to annually proclaim January 30 as Fred Korematsu Day of Civil Liberties and the Constitution.

SB 944 (Runner), Chapter 114, Statutes of 2010. Requires the Governor to annually proclaim February 6 as Ronald Reagan Day.

SB 1256 (Hancock), Chapter 115, 2010. Requires the Governor to annually proclaim January 23 as Ed Roberts Day.

SB 572 (Leno), Chapter 626, Statutes of 2009. Requires the Governor to annually proclaim May 22 as Harvey Milk Day.

AB 717 (Cook), Chapter 158, Statutes of 2009. Requires the governor to annually proclaim March 30 as Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

None on file

Opposition

None on file

Analysis Prepared by: Kenton Stanhope / G.O. / (916) 319-2531