

**First Regular Session
Seventy-fourth General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO**

INTRODUCED

LLS NO. 23-0978.01 Jessica Herrera x4218

HOUSE BILL 23-1271

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

Gonzales-Gutierrez and Soper,

SENATE SPONSORSHIP

(None),

House Committees

State, Civic, Military, & Veterans Affairs

Senate Committees

A BILL FOR AN ACT

101 **CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF LUNAR NEW YEAR DAY AS AN**
102 **OBSERVED STATE HOLIDAY.**

Bill Summary

(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at <http://leg.colorado.gov>.)

The bill designates Lunar New Year Day as an observed, but not a legal, state holiday.

1 *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:*

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.
Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing law.
Dashes through the words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law.

1 **SECTION 1. Legislative declaration.** (1) The general assembly
2 finds and declares that:

3 (a) Designating Lunar New Year Day as an observed state holiday
4 permits Coloradans the time to celebrate Asian American culture and
5 recognize an important part of the fabric of United States diversity.

6 (b) The Lunar New Year can be traced back to the 14th century
7 B.C. in China and is based on the lunar calendar. The beginning of the
8 new year usually commences between late January and mid-February and
9 is one of the most important holidays for many Asian American
10 communities. The Asian diaspora has expanded the Lunar New Year Day
11 celebration into an annual worldwide event that is celebrated by about
12 two-thirds of Asian Americans and many Asians and non-Asians from
13 China, Viet Nam, Taiwan, South Korea, Malaysia, Indonesia, the
14 Philippines, and many other places.

15 (c) Over two billion people celebrate Lunar New Year worldwide.
16 Participants in Lunar New Year uphold the tradition of spending time and
17 sharing blessings with family and loved ones. It is traditionally a period
18 to wish upon others good fortune, health, prosperity, and happiness.

19 (d) Currently, Lunar New Year Day is a recognized school holiday
20 in cities and counties across the United States including New York City,
21 Iowa City, San Francisco, Montgomery County in Maryland, and
22 Philadelphia, all of which have decided to close schools for a day each
23 year to observe the holiday.

24 (e) For many Asian Americans, Lunar New Year Day is an
25 incredibly important, festive, and deeply traditional holiday. It is the most
26 significant time of the year for the community and is celebrated in the
27 United States and across the globe. With the Asian American community

1 being the fastest growing population in the United States, and with the
2 popularity of the holiday continuing to grow, recognizing Lunar New
3 Year Day as a state holiday would bring attention to the value of the
4 holiday and the people who celebrate it.

5 (f) Additionally, for the past three years, Asian Americans have
6 been experiencing a surge in anti-Asian hate crime. Since the COVID-19
7 pandemic started, police departments have reported an increase in hate
8 crimes targeted at Asian Americans. A growing population coupled with
9 increased activism has boosted Asian American visibility and political
10 power just as a rising tide of anti-Asian sentiment has led to
11 discrimination, isolation, and violence against people of Asian descent.
12 Increasing the visibility of cultural traditions that are widely celebrated
13 among the Asian diaspora would serve as a counterbalance to the
14 marginalization that many in the Asian American community have
15 encountered over the years.

16 (g) The general assembly further finds and declares that adding
17 Lunar New Year Day to the list of Colorado's observed holidays is an
18 important step toward sending a powerful message of inclusion and
19 embracement of the Asian American community and culture.
20 Recognizing Lunar New Year Day as an observed holiday would not only
21 lift up a community of people who have been historically marginalized
22 but would also send a powerful message that the state of Colorado
23 embraces diversity.

24 (2) The general assembly further finds and declares that:

25 (a) Observing Lunar New Year Day as a state holiday would
26 allow more Coloradans to acknowledge and honor this momentous
27 tradition and invite the wider community to celebrate this holiday.

1 (b) It is appropriate to recognize the cultural and historical
2 significance of Lunar New Year and acknowledge all individuals who
3 celebrate this significant occasion by designating Lunar New Year Day
4 as an observed state holiday.

5 **SECTION 2.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** 24-11-115 as
6 follows:

7 **24-11-115. Lunar New Year Day.** THE FIRST FRIDAY OF
8 FEBRUARY IN EACH YEAR IS KNOWN AS "LUNAR NEW YEAR DAY".
9 APPROPRIATE OBSERVANCE MAY BE HELD BY THE PUBLIC AND IN ALL
10 PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF THE STATE.

11 **SECTION 3. Act subject to petition - effective date.** This act
12 takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on the day following the expiration of the
13 ninety-day period after final adjournment of the general assembly; except
14 that, if a referendum petition is filed pursuant to section 1 (3) of article V
15 of the state constitution against this act or an item, section, or part of this
16 act within such period, then the act, item, section, or part will not take
17 effect unless approved by the people at the general election to be held in
18 November 2024 and, in such case, will take effect on the date of the
19 official declaration of the vote thereon by the governor.