

House Economic Development and Workforce Services Committee
February 18th, 2025

Bill: 2nd substitute HB 351 – Election Day Amendments

Sponsor: Representative Ryan D. Wilcox

Floor Sponsor: Undeclared

UASD Position: Tracking

This Bill addresses state holidays.

Discussion: Representative Wilcox presented the 2nd substitute for HB 351, which was adopted by the Committee. He explained that if the 2nd substitute were to become law, Election Day would be recognized as a state holiday, replacing the state-recognized holiday, Columbus Day. The goal of making Election Day a state holiday is to increase voter participation. Representative Cutler questioned whether making Election Day a holiday would actually increase or decrease voter turnout. The sponsor responded by citing examples from other states and countries where similar legislation has led to higher voter participation.

Representative Shelley raised concerns about removing Columbus Day, viewing it as part of a broader trend of erasing the “founding fathers” from history, which he considered unpatriotic. The sponsor clarified that Columbus was not considered a "founding father" and argued that the founding fathers would likely prefer a holiday celebrating the values of the country rather than one dedicated to honoring them personally. He also noted that while Columbus Day would no longer be recognized at the state level, it would remain a federal holiday.

Representatives Shallenberger and Hawkins spoke in favor of the Bill, while Representative Fiefia also expressed support but urged the sponsor to consider returning to the original version of the Bill, which made Election Day a state holiday without removing Columbus Day as a state holiday.

Yeas: 7

Nays: 1

N/V: 2

Outcome: 2nd substitute HB 351 passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.