

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 7

Introduced by Assembly Member Bonta

December 1, 2014

An act to add Section 37222.18 to the Education Code, and to add Section 6725 to the Government Code, relating to public schools.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 7, as introduced, Bonta. Public schools: Larry Itliong Day.

Existing law requires the Governor to proclaim certain days each year for specified reasons. Existing law also designates particular days each year as having special significance in public schools and educational institutions and encourages those entities to conduct suitable commemorative exercises on those dates.

This bill would require the Governor to annually proclaim October 25 as Larry Itliong Day, would designate that date of each year as having special significance in public schools and educational institutions, and would encourage those entities to observe that date by conducting exercises remembering the life of Larry Itliong and the contributions he made to the state.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the
- 2 following:
- 3 (a) Larry Itliong was a native of the Philippines and was born
- 4 on October 25, 1913, in San Nicolas, Pangasinan.

1 (b) At the young age of 15, with only a sixth grade education,
2 Larry Itliong decided to seek out the land of “milk and money” in
3 order to pursue his studies and moved to the United States of
4 America in 1929. As a result of the Great Depression, Larry Itliong
5 was forced to work on the railroads and then as a migrant farm
6 worker traveling through Montana, South Dakota, Washington,
7 and finally California. During that time, Larry Itliong learned of
8 the plight suffered by Filipinos and other immigrants working as
9 farm laborers.

10 (c) Larry Itliong was a prominent leader in one of the greatest
11 social justice movements in the United States of America: the
12 American farm labor movement. He organized a group of 1,500
13 Filipinos to strike against the grape growers of Delano, California,
14 and continued on that strike for eight days while suffering through
15 violence imposed by the growers’ hired hands and the sheriff
16 department and being thrown out of the labor camp.

17 (d) However, Larry Itliong remained tenacious and resilient,
18 calling upon César Chávez and his followers to join forces with
19 the Filipinos and strike together. Due partly as a result of Larry
20 Itliong’s persuasions, the two groups combined establishing the
21 United Farm Workers of America, one of the greatest unions in
22 the history of the nation. The unification of farm labor workers of
23 different ethnicities was unprecedented at that time, setting an
24 example for future generations of workers and organizers and
25 proving to be one of the reasons for the success of the movement.

26 (e) Larry Itliong moved on to become the President of the
27 Filipino American Political Alliance, the first national political
28 Filipino American organization and a crucial alliance between
29 Filipino professional and laborers that grew out of the Delano
30 Grape Strike.

31 (f) Larry Itliong was also instrumental in the founding of the
32 Pablo Agbayani Village, a retirement home built by volunteers for
33 retired Filipino Manongs who no longer had families and needed
34 a place to call home.

35 (g) Larry Itliong passed away in 1977 at the age of 63 leaving
36 behind his wife and seven children.

37 (h) The accomplishments and contributions of Larry Itliong
38 should be properly memorialized within the history and culture of
39 the United States of America. Larry Itliong deserves proper

1 recognition for his numerous sacrifices in the name of justice and
2 the suppression of severely inadequate working conditions.

3 (i) Larry Itliong’s legacy has been acknowledged in part in the
4 renaming of a Union City middle school, formerly known as
5 Alvarado Middle School. The middle school has been renamed
6 Itliong-Vera Cruz Middle School in honor of the two labor
7 movement heroes. It is the first school in the United States of
8 America to be named after a Filipino American.

9 SEC. 2. Section 37222.18 is added to the Education Code, to
10 read:

11 37222.18. (a) October 25 of each year is designated and set
12 apart as Larry Itliong Day, a day having special significance
13 pursuant to Section 37222.

14 (b) On Larry Itliong Day, all public schools and educational
15 institutions are encouraged to conduct exercises remembering the
16 life of Larry Itliong, recognizing his accomplishments, and
17 familiarizing pupils with the contributions he made to this state.

18 SEC. 3. Section 6725 is added to the Government Code, to
19 read:

20 6725. The Governor annually shall proclaim October 25 as
21 Larry Itliong Day.