
State Government & Tribal Relations Committee

SSB 5756

Brief Description: Establishing the semiquincentennial committee.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on State Government & Elections (originally sponsored by Senators Hunt, Muzzall and Conway; by request of Lieutenant Governor, Washington State Historical Society).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Establishes the Semiquincentennial Committee to coordinate and provide guidance for Washington's official observance of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States.

Hearing Date:

Staff: Jason Zolle (786-7124).

Background:

The Second Continental Congress, a meeting of delegates from the 13 colonies, voted for the independence of the United States on July 2, 1776, in Philadelphia. The Declaration of Independence was approved by Congress on July 4. Independence Day is celebrated annually on July 4.

Congress enacted the United States Semiquincentennial Commission Act of 2016 to establish a commission to plan, develop, and coordinate the commemoration of United States history leading up to the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States, which will be celebrated on July 4, 2026.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary of Bill:

The Semiquincentennial Committee (Committee) is established to coordinate and provide guidance for Washington's official observance of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States, as marked by the Declaration of Independence in 1776.

Committee Members.

The Committee includes the following members:

- one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate;
- one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;
- the Lieutenant Governor, or their designee;
- the Secretary of State, or their designee;
- the Superintendent of Public Instruction, or their designee;
- the director, or their designee, for the following agencies: Governor's Office of Indian Affairs; the Washington State Historical Society (WSHS); Eastern Washington State Historical Society; Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation; Washington State Parks; Department of Commerce; and Washington State Arts Commission;
- one member selected by each of the following: the Commission on African American Affairs; the Commission on Asian American Affairs; the Commission on Hispanic Affairs; the LGBTQ Commission; and the Women's Commission;
- one member representing Humanities Washington, appointed by the Governor; and
- any additional persons invited by the Committee to serve as honorary members.

The Lieutenant Governor is the chair of the Committee. The WSHS provides administrative support to the Committee and may employ personnel, contract for services, and receive, expend, and allocate gifts, grants, and donations on behalf of the Committee.

Committee Duties.

The Committee must submit a yearly report of its activities to the Legislature. The Committee may:

- cooperate with national, regional, statewide, and local entities promoting the semiquincentennial;
- assist, plan, or conduct semiquincentennial events;
- support, plan, or produce educational resources and programs related to the semiquincentennial;
- engage in or encourage fundraising activities including revenue-generating enterprises, as well as the solicitation of charitable gifts, grants, or donations;
- coordinate interagency participation in the observance; create subcommittees comprised of committee members, honorary members, and community members to further the goals of the Committee; and perform other related duties.

The Semiquincentennial Account is created to finance the activities of the Committee. The

Lieutenant Governor and the director of the WSHS may authorize expenditures from the account. An appropriation is not required for expenditures.

The act expires June 30, 2027.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.