

Addressed: Chair Bowman, Vice-Chair Drazan, Vice-Chair Pham, and members of the House Rules Committee,

As an Asian American student and a Youth Leader with the Chinese Friendship Association of Portland, I fully support the passing of HB 3595.

The legal recognition of Lunar New Year is extremely important to CFAP and to our community. Over 130,000 to 180,000 residents in Oregon celebrate Lunar New Year. Many children during the Western New Year often stay up the night before to welcome in the new year, and this is a tradition for Lunar New Year as well. However, because children often have school the next day, and adults work, vital parts of the Lunar New Year are often left uncelebrated. This year, my Lunar New Year celebration was cut early, because many of our guests had school and work the next day. Imagine having Christmas dinner, or even the New Year Countdown being shortened because you have work the next day. Imagine having to cancel or postpone Christmas dinner to the next Saturday, with only half of your family, because no one had work off. America has many holidays, sure, but America also has the most diverse population in the world. We should be proud of this diversity, and welcome it. Becoming more aware of different holidays across cultures helps with cultural understanding and tolerance, and decreases ignorant and needless discrimination against cultures.

Additionally, with the amendment that is currently being processed, businesses can decide whether to make Lunar New Year a paid holiday or not, lessening the fiscal effects of this bill.

Lunar New Year is already a State Holiday in California, Colorado, New York, New Jersey, and Washington. UNESCO has recognized Lunar New Year as a culturally significant holiday, and the UN has recognized it as an official floating holiday. For the interest of cultural awareness and understanding, and a more harmonious existence together, I implore you to pass House Bill 3595, to recognize Lunar New Year as an commemorative holiday.

Signed,

Ophilia Lu

Lake Oswego High School Senior