

Testimony in Support of HB 3768 | Nowruz Day

May 17th, 2025

Submitter: Dr. Anousha Sedighi

Submitted to: Senate Committee on Rules

Honorable Chair and Committee Members,

I am writing in support of HB3768 to establish March 21 as “Nowruz day” in Oregon. Nowruz is a secular holiday celebrated by 300 million people in the Balkans, the Black Sea Basin, the Caucasus, Central Asia, the Middle East, and other regions. Nowruz is an official holiday in the following countries: Afghanistan, Albania, Azerbaijan (5 days), Georgia, Iran (13 days), the Kurdish part of Iraq, Kazakhstan (4 days), Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan (4 days), Turkmenistan (2 days), and Uzbekistan.

Nowruz is celebrated by people of all faiths, including Muslims, Jews, Christians, Bahais, as well as Atheists, etc. As such, it is not linked to a specific religion. That is why the United Nations recognizes March 21st as the International Day of Nowruz, emphasizing its “global observance and cultural significance as it symbolizes diversity, peace, and connecting with nature”.

Unlike the Gregorian New Year (January 1) and Easter which are based on Christianity, Nowruz is based on science as it marks the spring equinox as the basis for a new year. As such, it transcends beyond regions, religions, ethnicities, and cultures by uniting people in celebrating the renewal of nature.

I hope those who took the time to write an opposing letter will read this letter and re-evaluate their opinion with an open mind.

Sincerely,

Anousha Sedighi

Anousha Sedighi

Professor of Persian and Head of Persian Program
Portland State University