

[Home](#)[Bill Information](#)[California Law](#)[Publications](#)[Other Resources](#)[My Subscriptions](#)[My Favorites](#)

AB-2455 Bruce Lee Day. (2025-2026)

SHARE THIS:



Date Published: 02/20/2026 09:00 PM

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE— 2025–2026 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

NO. 2455

Introduced by Assembly Members Haney, Fong, and Lee
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Caloza, Harabedian, Kalra, and Nguyen)

February 20, 2026

An act to add Section 37222.22 to the Education Code, and to add Section 6737 to the Government Code, relating to Bruce Lee Day.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2455, as introduced, Haney. Bruce Lee 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 and encourages all public schools and educational institutions to observe those days and to conduct suitable commemorative exercises on those days.

This bill would require the Governor to annually proclaim May 17 as Bruce Lee Day, would designate and set apart that date each year as having special significance, and would encourage all public schools and educational institutions to observe that date by conducting exercises remembering the life of Bruce Lee and recognizing his accomplishments and the contributions he made to the state.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: no Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) Bruce Lee, also known as Lee Jun Fan and Lee Siu Loong, was a trailblazing Chinese American martial artist, actor, and filmmaker who became an international icon of martial arts and popular culture. His innovative philosophies and dynamic performances helped bridge Eastern and Western cultures and inspired millions around the world.

(b) Bruce Lee was born on November 27, 1940, in San Francisco, California, in the Chinatown neighborhood. His father, Lee Hoi-Chuen, was a Cantonese opera star touring the United States, and his mother, Grace Ho, was of Chinese and European descent.

(c) Bruce Lee's birth and early family history are deeply connected to San Francisco's Chinatown and its tradition of Chinese performing arts. His parents were in San Francisco as part of a touring performing arts community that contributed to the cultural vitality of Chinatown during an era in which Asian immigrants and Asian Americans faced persistent discrimination and exclusion.

(d) Bruce Lee was raised primarily in Hong Kong, where he appeared in more than 20 films as a child actor and began studying the Wing Chun style of gung fu under Grandmaster Ip Man. The Lee family's ancestral roots trace to Foshan in Guangdong Province, a region historically linked to the overseas Chinese diaspora and commemorated locally as Bruce Lee's ancestral home.

(e) On May 17, 1959, at 18 years of age, Bruce Lee returned to the United States and spent time in San Francisco's Chinatown. During this period, he experienced the realities of working life and community networks within Chinatown, including taking entry-level work and engaging with local social and cultural spaces.

(f) During his time in San Francisco, Bruce Lee shared his talents and discipline through informal instruction and public demonstrations. These experiences helped shape his lifelong commitment to teaching, self-development, and the idea that knowledge and skill should be pursued with sincerity, rigor, and openness.

(g) In 1964, Bruce Lee appeared in San Francisco's Chinatown at a public performance venue and conducted a martial arts demonstration that became a significant moment in the Bay Area's martial arts history. The demonstration, its reception, and the broader response from the local martial arts community contributed to events that Bruce Lee later described as influential to his personal development, training philosophy, and commitment to innovation.

(h) In California, Bruce Lee opened a Jun Fan Gung Fu Institute in Oakland in 1964 and later established a school in Los Angeles's Chinatown in 1967. During this period, he gained widespread recognition for his martial arts demonstrations, including showcasing his famed one-inch punch at the 1964 Long Beach International Karate Championships, an appearance that helped draw the attention of Hollywood producers.

(i) Bruce Lee's skill and charisma led to opportunities in Hollywood. He was cast as Kato in the 1966 television series "The Green Hornet," making him one of the first Asian American actors to costar in an American television series. Facing limited opportunities in the United States due to racial barriers, Bruce Lee returned to Hong Kong in 1971, where he starred in the martial arts films "The Big Boss" (1971) and "Fist of Fury" (1972), both of which broke box office records in Asia.

(j) In 1972, Bruce Lee wrote, directed, and starred in "The Way of the Dragon," further cementing his status as a major film star in Asia. He then began production on "Game of Death." After filming three complete fight scenes, including a spectacular battle with Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Bruce put the film on hold because he was contacted by Warner Brothers Studios to begin production on "Enter the Dragon." With this film, Bruce Lee became the first Asian American actor to star in a leading role in a Hollywood movie, breaking new ground for representation in American cinema.

(k) Bruce Lee tragically died in Hong Kong on July 20, 1973, at the age of 32, just a month before the worldwide release of "Enter the Dragon." Though he died in Hong Kong, Bruce Lee was recognized as a domicile of the State of California at the time of his death. Despite his untimely death, his legacy endures through his films, writings, and the global growth of martial arts and action cinema that he inspired.

(l) Bruce Lee developed a martial arts philosophy he called Jeet Kune Do, emphasizing efficiency, directness, and freedom from the dogma of style. This approach challenged rigid doctrine, influenced the evolution of modern mixed martial arts, and encouraged adaptability and self-expression in combat and in life.

(m) Bruce Lee helped break down racial barriers in the entertainment industry. At a time when Asians in Hollywood were often confined to stereotypical roles, he achieved international fame on his own terms and became a source of pride for Asian American communities. In 2012, the United States House of Representatives honored Bruce Lee as "a master teacher, a catalyst for social change and civil rights, and a cultural and American icon," reflecting the impact of his life beyond martial arts.

(n) Bruce Lee demonstrated a sustained commitment to racial solidarity and inclusion by welcoming students regardless of race and rejecting efforts to exclude Black students, including by teaching and mentoring Jesse

Glover, who is widely described as his first student in the United States.

(o) Bruce Lee also formed cross-racial friendships and professional collaborations with prominent Black Americans, including training Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, and starring alongside actor and martial artist Jim Kelly in "Enter the Dragon." Accounts also describe Lee's exchanges with Black cultural figures, reflecting the broader relationships that informed his views on race and inclusion.

(p) Bruce Lee has been posthumously honored with numerous awards and recognitions for his contributions, including a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1993, recognition by Time magazine in 1999 as one of the 100 most influential people of the 20th century, and his 2015 induction into the California Hall of Fame by Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr., solidifying his legacy as one of California's great cultural icons. In 2024, the City of Oakland renamed a street Bruce Lee Way. Continuing this recognition, the United States Postal Service has announced it will issue a Bruce Lee Forever stamp, to go on sale nationwide with a first-day-of-issue event on February 18, 2026, in Seattle, Washington.

(q) Bruce Lee's work helped break barriers in American entertainment and challenged stereotypes that limited opportunities for Asian American actors. By achieving international acclaim, he expanded possibilities for future generations and contributed to broader cultural recognition of Asian Americans in California and the nation.

(r) Bruce Lee's teaching and philosophy emphasized self-actualization, flow, constant learning, and honest self-expression. He promoted the idea that individuals should think critically, remain adaptable, and strive to understand others across cultural boundaries, values that align with the educational mission of public schools and institutions of learning.

(s) Bruce Lee's life and legacy continue to inspire Californians of all backgrounds, including students, educators, artists, athletes, and community leaders. His story provides an opportunity for schools to teach about the history of Chinese Americans and Asian Americans in California, the importance of representation, and the value of perseverance, creativity, and community contribution.

(t) The accomplishments and contributions of Bruce Lee should be properly memorialized within the history and culture of California and the United States. Bruce Lee deserves proper recognition for his groundbreaking contributions to martial arts and film, for breaking down racial barriers, and for promoting cross-cultural understanding.

SEC. 2. Section 37222.22 is added to the Education Code, to read:

37222.22. (a) May 17 of each year is designated and set apart as Bruce Lee Day, a day having special significance pursuant to Section 37222.

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

SEC. 3. Section 6737 is added to the Government Code, to read:

6737. The Governor annually shall proclaim May 17 as Bruce Lee Day.