

Legislation creates official Native American Day in California

Gov. Jerry Brown signed legislation on Thursday establishing a new official state holiday, Native American Day, on the fourth Friday in September.

The bill, AB 1973, was authored by Assemblyman Roger Hernandez (D-West Covina). State agencies will still be open and state employees will not have the day off from work.

On Friday, as Native Americans rallied at the Capitol for an annual event, Brown issued a proclamation reviewing their history in California.

"The first Europeans to arrive in California encountered hundreds of thousands of people organized into hundreds of distinct tribal groups," he wrote. "They flourished in the bountiful hills and valleys of what would someday become the Golden State."

Brown continued, "The contact between these first Californians and successive waves of newcomers over three succeeding centuries was marked by the utter devastation of Native American people, families and society."

Now, Brown said, their continued contributions to California "stand as testament to the resilience and enduring spirit of our native peoples."

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