



~~AN ACT INSTITUTING THE DESIGNATING THE LAST FULL WEEK IN SEPTEMBER AS CELEBRATE FREEDOM WEEK IN MONTANA'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS; PROVIDING THAT AT LEAST 3 HOURS OF INSTRUCTION ABOUT THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION, AND THE MONTANA CONSTITUTION BE PROVIDED DURING CELEBRATE FREEDOM WEEK; REQUIRING SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO ENSURE THAT PUPILS IN GRADES 3 THROUGH 12 RECITE A CERTAIN PASSAGE FROM THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE; PROVIDING EXCEPTIONS FOR PARENTAL REQUESTS, FOR CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTIONS, OR FOR CHILDREN OF CERTAIN FOREIGN REPRESENTATIVES REQUIRING THE TRUSTEES TO ADOPT A POLICY TO ENSURE THE EFFECTIVE CONDUCT OF COMMEMORATIVE EXERCISES REQUIRED BY LAW; AMENDING SECTION 20-1-306, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE."~~

WHEREAS, informing students about the sacrifices made during the founding of the United States and the values that underpin the nation is a worthy educational goal; and

WHEREAS, promoting an in-depth understanding of founding documents, including the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, and the Montana Constitution and their historical context and significance, will further this goal; and

WHEREAS, students should have a clear understanding of the relationship between ideas in the Declaration of Independence and key events in American history, including immigration, the American Revolution, the formulation of the Constitution, the abolitionist movement, and the women's suffrage movement; and

WHEREAS, the learning process will help instill a sense of patriotism and civic responsibility among students; and

WHEREAS, a designated time during the school year when these principles are highlighted is a worthy use of school time.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

Section 1. Section 20-1-306, MCA, is amended to read:

"20-1-306. Commemorative exercises on certain days. (1) All districts shall conduct appropriate exercises ~~during the school day~~ on the following commemorative days:

- (a) Lincoln's Birthday (February 12);
- (b) Washington's Birthday (February 22);
- (c) Arbor Day (last Friday in April);
- (d) Flag Day (June 14);
- (e) Citizenship Day (September 17);
- (f) American Indian Heritage Day (fourth Friday in September);
- (g) Columbus Day (October 12);
- (h) Pioneer Day (November 1);
- (i) Freedom Week (last full week of September), to educate students about the sacrifices made for freedom in the founding of the United States and the values on which the United States was founded;
- (j) other days designated by the legislature or governor as legal holidays.

(2) When these commemorative days fall on Saturday or Sunday, exercises may be conducted the preceding Friday.

(3) The trustees of a district shall adopt a policy to address and ensure the effective conduct of appropriate exercises for the commemorative days provided in subsection (1)."

Section 2. Effective date. [This act] is effective July 1, 2025.

- END -

I hereby certify that the within bill,
HB 591, originated in the House.

Chief Clerk of the House

Speaker of the House

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2025.

President of the Senate

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2025.

HOUSE BILL NO. 591

INTRODUCED BY G. OBLANDER, S. KLAKKEN, E. ALBUS, A. NICASTRO, T. SHARP, C. COCHRAN, E. TILLEMANN, C. SPRUNGER, S. FITZPATRICK, C. GLIMM, B. LER, J. ETCHART, B. BARKER, L. BREWSTER, N. DURAM, T. FALK, G. HERTZ, G. KMETZ, T. MCGILLVRAY, G. NIKOLAKAKOS, J. TREBAS, Z. WIRTH, J. HINKLE, J. DARLING

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