

# **WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE**

## **2024 REGULAR SESSION**

**Introduced**

### **House Bill 4254**

By Delegate Rowe

[Introduced January 10, 2024; Referred to  
the Committee on Government Organization]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §2-2-1a of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to  
 2 declaring February 3 as a special memorial day to be known as Freedom Day to  
 3 memorialize the February 3, 1865, Act by the Legislature that abolished slavery in West  
 4 Virginia.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:*

**ARTICLE 2. LEGAL HOLIDAYS; SPECIAL MEMORIAL DAYS; CONSTRUCTION OF  
 STATUTES; DEFINITIONS.**

**§2-2-1a. Special memorial days.**

1 (a) The Governor shall, by proclamation, declare the week beginning with the Sunday  
 2 before Thanksgiving as a special memorial week to be known as Native American Indian Heritage  
 3 Week.

4 (b) The first Tuesday after the first Monday of November is designated Susan B. Anthony  
 5 Day and shall only be a legal holiday in all years ending in an even number. The Governor shall  
 6 annually issue a proclamation calling on all schools, civic organizations, government departments  
 7 and citizens to undertake activities on the designated day and surrounding days to pay tribute to  
 8 the accomplishments of Susan B. Anthony in securing the civil and political rights of all Americans,  
 9 including securing equal voting rights for women.

10 (c) The Governor shall, by proclamation, declare the week during which December 7 falls  
 11 to be a special memorial week, to be known as Pearl Harbor and Military Appreciation week,  
 12 honoring all West Virginians who fought in World War II and all other military conflicts and shall  
 13 encourage all municipalities in the state to do the same. The State Department of Education is  
 14 directed to implement a program involving activities in which students shall participate which shall  
 15 recognize the contributions West Virginians have made to their country through service in the  
 16 United States Military.

17 (d) The Governor shall, by proclamation, declare March 30 as a special memorial day to be

18 known as Vietnam Veteran Recognition Day honoring all West Virginians who served in the United  
19 States Armed Forces in the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning February 28, 1961,  
20 and ending May 7, 1975, and shall encourage all counties and municipalities in the state to do the  
21 same.

22 (e) The Governor shall, by proclamation, declare August 7 as a special memorial day, to be  
23 known as Purple Heart Recognition Day, honoring all West Virginians who, while serving in the  
24 United States Armed Forces, have been wounded or killed in action and shall encourage all  
25 municipalities and counties in the state to do the same.

26 (f) The Governor shall, by proclamation, declare July 27 as a special memorial day to be  
27 known as Korean War Veteran Recognition Day honoring all West Virginians who served in the  
28 United States Armed Forces in the Korean War, and shall encourage all counties and  
29 municipalities in the state to do the same.

30 (g) The Governor shall, by proclamation, declare the first Thursday in May as the West  
31 Virginia Day of Prayer. The West Virginia Day of Prayer corresponds with the National Day of  
32 Prayer, 36 U.S.C. §119, on which the people of West Virginia may turn to God in prayer and  
33 meditation at churches, in groups, and as individuals.

34 (h) The Governor shall, by proclamation, declare November 14 as a special memorial day  
35 to be known as Marshall University 75 Memorial Day honoring the 75 persons who were killed in  
36 that tragic crash, and shall encourage all counties and municipalities in the state to do the same.

37 (i) The Governor shall, by proclamation, declare February 3 as a special memorial day to  
38 be known as Freedom Day to memorialize the February 3, 1865, Act by the Legislature that  
39 abolished slavery in West Virginia.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to declare February 3 as a special memorial day to be known as Freedom Day to memorialize the February 3, 1865, Act by the Legislature that abolished slavery in West Virginia.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.