
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1855 Session of
1999

INTRODUCED BY BUNT, ARGALL, ARMSTRONG, BARRAR, BROWNE,
CAPPABIANCA, CIVERA, CLYMER, CORRIGAN, COSTA, COY, DALLY,
DeLUCA, DEMPSEY, DERMODY, DeWEESE, DiGIROLAMO, EGOLF,
FICHTER, GEIST, GEORGE, GRUCELA, HERSHEY, HESS, HUTCHINSON,
LEDERER, LUCYK, MAJOR, MARKOSEK, MASLAND, McCALL, MELIO,
MICOZZIE, ORIE, PETRONE, PHILLIPS, PISTELLA, PLATTS, ROBERTS,
SATHER, SCHRODER, SEMMEL, SHANER, STABACK, STETLER, SURRA,
E. Z. TAYLOR, TIGUE, TRELLO, WILLIAMS, WOGAN, WOJNAROSKI,
YOUNGBLOOD, YUDICHAK, HARHAI AND SAYLOR, SEPTEMBER 27, 1999

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY
PREPAREDNESS, SEPTEMBER 27, 1999

AN ACT

1 Imposing certain requirements for the observance of Veterans Day
2 in public schools and institutions of higher education.

3 WHEREAS, Veterans Day, November 11, is a nationally
4 recognized holiday dedicated to honoring the many veterans of
5 the United States who served the nation militarily; and

6 WHEREAS, Most, if not all, primary and secondary schools
7 within this Commonwealth observe Veterans Day as a holiday; and

8 WHEREAS, The various Federal, State, county and municipal
9 governments observe Veterans Day as a holiday; and

10 WHEREAS, There is concern that the 14 universities comprising
11 the State System of Higher Education do not observe Veterans
12 Day, nor properly set aside ceremonies or other events to
13 recognize or celebrate the meaning and spirit of the holiday;
14 and

1 WHEREAS, There is concern that institutions of higher
2 education within this Commonwealth hosting ROTC programs on
3 their campuses do not readily allow or accommodate the ROTC
4 cadets so that the cadets may attend and participate in Veteran
5 Day ceremonies or functions; and

6 WHEREAS, There is concern that the primary and secondary
7 schools within this Commonwealth do not properly set aside time
8 to recognize the meaning, history and spirit of Veterans Day
9 during the course of instruction.

10 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
11 hereby enacts as follows:

12 Section 1. Short title.

13 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Veterans Day
14 Observance in Schools Act.

15 Section 2. Definitions.

16 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
17 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
18 context clearly indicates otherwise:

19 "Department." The Department of Education of the
20 Commonwealth.

21 "Institution of higher education." Any of the following:

22 (1) A community college operating under Article XIX-A of
23 the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the
24 Public School Code of 1949.

25 (2) A university comprising the State System of Higher
26 Education.

27 (3) The following State-related institutions:

28 (i) The Pennsylvania State University.

29 (ii) The University of Pittsburgh.

30 (iii) Temple University.

1 (iv) Lincoln University.

2 (4) An institution that is designated by the
3 Commonwealth as State-related after the effective date of
4 this act.

5 (5) An independent institution of higher education that
6 is located in and chartered by the Commonwealth, that
7 operates not-for-profit and that receives Federal or State
8 assistance, either directly or in the form of financial
9 assistance to students.

10 Section 3. Observance requirements for public schools.

11 Each primary and secondary public school in this
12 Commonwealth, regardless of whether the school is closed on
13 Veterans Day, shall set aside a period during the last school
14 day prior to November 11 each year for a moment of reflection on
15 the meaning, history and spirit of Veterans Day in the United
16 States of America. The school may conduct an assembly for all
17 students, hold special classroom programs, permit visitation by
18 veterans or conduct a moment of silence with special notice to
19 the student body of the significance of the moment of
20 reflection.

21 Section 4. Observation requirements for institutions of higher
22 education.

23 (a) General rule.--Each institution of higher education
24 shall organize a formal program or ceremony on November 11 each
25 year to officially observe Veterans Day. The program or ceremony
26 shall recognize the history, meaning or spirit of Veterans Day
27 and include members of patriotic or veterans-based organizations
28 as participants or guests of the event.

29 (b) Notification.--The institution of higher education shall
30 provide timely notification of the program or ceremony to its

1 faculty, staff, student body and surrounding community and shall
2 submit a report to the department, with copies to the chairman
3 and minority chairman of the Education Committee of the Senate
4 and the chairman and minority chairman of the House of
5 Representatives, regarding the program or ceremony.

6 (c) Excused absences.--

7 (1) Each student and faculty member enrolled in an
8 accredited ROTC program located on any campus of an
9 institution of higher education and any faculty member,
10 administrator, student or staff person of the institution of
11 higher education who is on active duty in the United States
12 military, its reserves or the National Guard shall be excused
13 from that person's duties and assignments on Veterans Day for
14 the express purpose of being able to attend or participate in
15 the observance of Veterans Day with that person's unit or
16 corps.

17 (2) No such person may lose any compensation or forfeit
18 any leave time from the institution of higher education for
19 the excuse authorized by this section.

20 (3) No such student may be penalized by an instructor of
21 the higher education for the excuse authorized by this
22 section and shall be permitted to take any exam, quiz or
23 recitation scheduled for Veterans Day on another day in
24 accordance with the policy of the instructor for other
25 excused absences.

26 Section 5. Regulations.

27 The department shall promulgate the rules and regulations
28 necessary for the administration of this act.

29 Section 6. Effective date.

30 This act shall take effect immediately.