

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 248 Session of 2021

INTRODUCED BY PHILLIPS-HILL, MASTRIANO, DUSH, J. WARD, BARTOLOTTA, TARTAGLIONE, YAW, K. WARD, MARTIN, SCHWANK, ROBINSON, SCAVELLO, PITTMAN, AUMENT AND BROOKS, FEBRUARY 18, 2021

AS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AS AMENDED, OCTOBER 6, 2021

AN ACT

1 Amending Title 38 (Holidays and Observances) of the Pennsylvania
2 Consolidated Statutes, providing for holidays and
3 observances.

4 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
5 hereby enacts as follows:

6 Section 1. Title 38 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated
7 Statutes is amended by adding parts to read:

8 PART I

9 GENERAL PROVISIONS

10 (Reserved)

11 PART II

12 SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

13 Chapter

14 11. Preliminary Provisions (Reserved)

15 13. Veteran Recognition

16 CHAPTER 11

1 PRELIMINARY PROVISIONS

2 (Reserved)

3 CHAPTER 13

4 VETERAN RECOGNITION

5 Sec.

6 1301. Scope of chapter.

7 1302. Persian Gulf War Veterans Day.

8 1303. Global War on Terrorism Veterans Day.

9 § 1301. Scope of chapter.

10 This chapter recognizes the contributions of veterans of the
11 United States Armed Forces from this Commonwealth in major
12 conflicts since the Vietnam War.

13 § 1302. Persian Gulf War Veterans Day.

14 (a) Legislative findings and declarations.--The General
15 Assembly finds and declares as follows:

16 (1) On August 2, 1990, Saddam Hussein ordered Iraqi
17 troops to invade and occupy the sovereign nation of Kuwait.

18 (2) The United States led an international coalition
19 demanding Saddam Hussein to withdraw Iraqi forces from Kuwait
20 by January 15, 1991.

21 (3) After Iraq failed to meet the deadline, passed by
22 the United Nations Security Council, President George H. W.
23 Bush on January 16, 1991, ordered United States Armed Forces <--
24 to begin "Operation Desert Storm."

25 (4) On January 17, 750,000 coalition forces from 36
26 nations, including 540,000 United States Armed Forces, began
27 the battle to liberate Kuwait from occupation.

28 (5) After an intensive air campaign, coalition forces
29 liberated Kuwait City on February 28, 1991.

30 (6) On March 6, after negotiating a cease-fire,

1 President Bush announced the end of combat operations.

2 (7) By the end of the conflict, 200 United States Armed
3 Forces members were killed, including 29 from this
4 Commonwealth.

5 (8) The bravery of United States Armed Forces and their
6 allies should be recognized for the liberation of Kuwait and
7 restoration of Kuwait's sovereignty as an independent nation.

8 (b) Designation.--March 6 of each year is designated as
9 "Persian Gulf War Veterans Day."

10 (c) Proclamation.--The Governor shall issue annually a
11 proclamation encouraging all public schools and educational
12 institutions to observe "Persian Gulf War Veterans Day" and to
13 conduct exercises recognizing the contributions of all those
14 involved in the Persian Gulf War and remembering the sacrifices
15 they made for their country. The proclamation may not mandate a
16 public school or educational institution to participate in the
17 observance.

18 § 1303. Global War on Terrorism Veterans Day.

19 (a) Legislative findings and declarations.--The General
20 Assembly finds and declares as follows:

21 ~~(1) The campaign in Afghanistan, which is America's~~ <--
22 ~~longest conflict, began in 2001 and continues to this day.~~

23 AMERICA'S CONFLICT IN AFGHANISTAN BEGAN IN 2001 AND BECAME <--
24 OUR COUNTRY'S LONGEST MILITARY CONFLICT.

25 (2) Following the terrorist attacks on September 11,
26 2001, the United States demanded that the Taliban regime stop
27 harboring Al Qaeda, the terrorist organization responsible
28 for the 9/11 attacks, and hand over the Al Qaeda leader Osama
29 bin Laden.

30 (3) President George W. Bush ordered United States Armed

1 Forces to begin "Operation Enduring Freedom" (OEF) to combat
2 terrorism in Afghanistan and confront Al Qaeda.

3 (4) United States Armed Forces first entered Afghanistan
4 and began combat operations on October 7, 2001.

5 (5) On May 2, 2011, Osama bin Laden was killed during
6 the fighting after President Barack Obama ordered Navy SEALs
7 to raid Osama bin Laden's compound.

8 (6) On December 31, 2014, the United States and the
9 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) combat operations
10 in Afghanistan officially ended.

11 (7) Since the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom,
12 over 830,000 Americans, including 18,000 from this
13 Commonwealth, have served in Afghanistan.

14 (8) More than 2,000 members of the United States Armed
15 Forces, including 98 from this Commonwealth, were killed in
16 action in Afghanistan since combat began.

17 (9) More than 19,000 members of the United States Armed
18 Forces were wounded in service to their country during
19 Operation Enduring Freedom.

20 (10) When Operation Enduring Freedom ended, the United
21 States began a new phase of the campaign, named Operation
22 Freedom's Sentinel (OFS).

23 (11) United States Armed Forces remain in the country to
24 participate in a coalition mission to train, advise and
25 assist Afghan National Defense and Security Forces and to
26 conduct counterterrorism operations against the remnants of
27 Al Qaeda.

28 (12) During Operation Freedom's Sentinel more than 70
29 Americans have lost their lives and another 453 have been
30 wounded in action.

1 (13) On March 19, 2003, President George W. Bush
2 announced the beginning of combat operations in Iraq after
3 Saddam Hussein failed to meet the demands of the United
4 States.

5 (14) "Operation Iraqi Freedom" lasted for more than
6 seven years, reducing the influence of insurgents, stopping
7 sectarian violence, assisting in training the Iraq Security
8 Forces and promoting the development of Iraq's constitution
9 and elections.

10 (15) Major United States combat operations ended on
11 September 1, 2010. American troops remained in the country to
12 advise Iraqi Security Forces as part of "Operation New Dawn"
13 until the withdrawal on December 15, 2011.

14 (16) More than 4,000 members of the United States Armed
15 Forces lost their lives during "Operation Iraqi Freedom" and
16 "Operation New Dawn," including 197 from this Commonwealth,
17 and more than 32,000 were wounded.

18 (17) With the rise of the terrorist group known as the
19 Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), the United States
20 created a new combined joint task force in 2014, dubbed
21 "Operation Inherent Resolve."

22 (18) March 23, 2019, marked the end of ISIS controlling
23 any physical territory IN SYRIA AND IRAQ.

<--

24 (19) United States Armed Forces under "Operation
25 Inherent Resolve" continue to work by, with and through local
26 partners to defeat the final ISIS force and stabilize the
27 region.

28 (20) The fight against ISIS under "Operation Inherent
29 Resolve" has claimed more than 80 American lives, with
30 another 80 wounded in action.

1 (21) United States military personnel have served
2 domestically securing key infrastructure and support overseas
3 operation.

4 (22) Since September 11, 2001, members of the United
5 States military have served on nearly every continent
6 fighting international terrorism.

7 (b) Designation.--October 7 of each year is designated as
8 "Global War on Terrorism Veterans Day."

9 (c) Proclamation.--The Governor shall issue annually a
10 proclamation encouraging all public schools and educational
11 institutions to observe "Global War on Terrorism Veterans Day"
12 and to conduct exercises recognizing the contributions of all
13 those involved in the Global War on Terrorism and remembering
14 the sacrifices they made for their country. The proclamation may
15 not mandate a public school or educational institution to
16 participate in the observance.

17 Section 2. This act shall take effect immediately.