

SENATE BILL 1481

By Bailey

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 15,
Chapter 2, relative to days of special observance.

WHEREAS, it takes a hard-working man or woman, a horse, and cattle to make a "cowboy," and Tennessee has one of the richest "cowboy" traditions in the country. In fact, many historians, among them America's "cowboy" president, Theodore Roosevelt, believe that the word "corral" -- a fenced-in pen in which cattle are gathered -- and "roundup" -- whereby herds of cattle were assembled to be driven to distant markets -- were originated by 18th century pioneers living in the South, including Tennessee. Before Tennessee became a state in 1796, it was the nation's second territory, sometimes called the Southwest Territory, and thus was the "first West"; and

WHEREAS, after he migrated west, Hardeman County's John Chisum (1824-1884) organized the largest cattle ranch in the United States, controlling a swath of land in southeastern New Mexico and West Texas as big as four New England states combined; and

WHEREAS, Mary Ann (Dyer) Goodnight (1839-1926) was born in Madison County, moved to Texas, and married cattleman Charles Goodnight, the co-founder of the Goodnight-Loving Trail, which transported tens of thousands of cattle from Texas to Denver and beyond. The trail was made famous by the blockbuster television series *Lonesome Dove*, with Goodnight's character played by Tommy Lee Jones; and

WHEREAS, the Chisholm Trail was named after Jesse Chisholm (1805-1868), a Scots-Cherokee trader who established a number of trading posts in Texas after the Civil War. Thousands of Texas cattle were driven along the trail to the railhead in Abilene, Kansas, then taken to eastern stockyards for marketing; and

WHEREAS, for many years in the 1950s and 1960s, the largest outdoors rodeo in the United States was held in Franklin, and the event became affiliated with the internationally recognized Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA) in 2005; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee contains about 66,000 ranches and farms, each averaging 164 acres and spreading over nearly 11,000,000 acres. These local enterprises have an annual economic impact upon the state averaging between \$3.6 billion and \$4.28 billion. The cattle population stands at around 2,000,000. Beef cattle are the leading agricultural product in the state; and

WHEREAS, the livestock business represents about 43% of the state's total agricultural effort, and cattle are produced in all ninety-five Tennessee counties; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee ranks twelfth among the states in the U.S. in the number of beef cattle raised and sixth in the number of horses; and

WHEREAS, the American cowboy embodies the pioneering spirit of the men and women who helped establish this great country; and

WHEREAS, from ranching to rodeo, from music to cuisine, cowboy culture and tradition continue to shape Tennessee and this nation; and

WHEREAS, cowboys and cowgirls are American icons deserving of our admiration and recognition; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 15, Chapter 2, is amended by adding the following language as a new section:

The fourth Saturday of July of each year must be observed as the "Day of the Cowboy and Cowgirl in Tennessee" to be proclaimed as such by the governor, to honor and recognize American cowboys and cowgirls and cowboy culture. This day is not a legal holiday under § 15-1-101.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.