

HOUSE BILL NO. HB0177

Vietnam and veterans welcome home and thank you day.

Sponsored by: Representative(s) Jaggi, Blikre, Brown, Buchanan, Greear, Greene, Lockhart, Petersen and Vranish and Senator(s) Barnard, Christensen, Cooper, Hines, Jennings and Nutting

A BILL

for

1 AN ACT relating to state holidays and observances; making
2 findings with respect to the veterans of the Vietnam War
3 and other wars; providing for a Wyoming Veterans Welcome
4 Home Day; specifying the effect of the day of recognition;
5 and providing for an effective date.

6

7 *Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Wyoming:*

8

9 **Section 1.**

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11 (a) The legislature hereby finds and declares all of
12 the following:

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1 (i) In 2007, the United States Congress, by
2 separate Senate and House Resolutions, declared that a
3 Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day should be established;

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5 (ii) The Vietnam War was fought in Vietnam from
6 1961 to 1975, and involved North Vietnam and Viet Cong in
7 conflict with the United States and South Vietnam;

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9 (iii) The United States became involved in
10 Vietnam because policymakers in the United States believed
11 that if South Vietnam fell to a communist government,
12 communism would spread throughout the rest of southeast
13 Asia;

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15 (iv) Members of the United States armed forces
16 began serving in an advisory role to the South Vietnamese
17 in 1961;

18
19 (v) As a result of the Gulf of Tonkin incidents
20 on August 2 and 4, 1964, the United States overwhelmingly
21 passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution (Public Law 99-408),
22 on August 7, 1964, which effectively handed over the war-
23 making powers to President Johnson until such time as
24 "peace and security" had returned to Vietnam;

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2 (vi) In 1965, there were eighty thousand
3 (80,000) United States troops in Vietnam, and by 1969 a
4 peak of approximately five hundred forty-three thousand
5 (543,000) troops was reached;

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7 (vii) On January 27, 1973, the Treaty of Paris
8 was signed, which required the release of all United States
9 prisoners of war held in North Vietnam and the withdrawal
10 of all United States armed forces from South Vietnam;

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12 (viii) On March 29, 1973, the United States
13 armed forces completed the withdrawal of combat troops from
14 Vietnam;

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16 (ix) More than fifty-eight thousand (58,000)
17 members of the United States armed forces lost their lives
18 in Vietnam and more than three hundred thousand (300,000)
19 were wounded;

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21 (x) In 1982, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was
22 dedicated in the District of Columbia to commemorate those
23 members of the United States armed forces who died or were
24 declared missing in action in Vietnam;

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2 (xi) The Vietnam War was an extremely divisive
3 issue among the people of the United States;

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5 (xii) Upon their return home, members of the
6 United States armed forces who served bravely and
7 faithfully for the United States during the Vietnam War
8 were caught in the crossfire of public debate about the
9 involvement of the United States in the war. Many of these
10 veterans were treated with disrespect and their leaders
11 recommended they not wear their military uniform as they
12 returned home;

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14 (xiii) Additionally, many veterans returning
15 home from previous wars or overseas duty, especially Korean
16 War, Gulf War and Cold War veterans, were not properly
17 welcomed home and did not receive the thanks of a grateful
18 state and nation;

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20 (xiv) Our state and nation has learned the value
21 of a simple "thank you" and "welcome home" as shown by the
22 recognition and celebrations for those who are serving in
23 the ongoing War on Terror;

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1 (xv) The establishment of a Wyoming Veterans
2 Welcome Home Day to thank Vietnam and other veterans would
3 be an appropriate way to honor those members of the United
4 States armed forces who were not properly welcomed home
5 following their military service.

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7 **Section 2.** W.S. 8-4-109 is created to read:

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9 **8-4-109. Wyoming Veterans Welcome Home Day.**

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11 (a) In recognition of the members of the United
12 States armed forces who served bravely and faithfully for
13 the United States during the Vietnam War, and to all those
14 members of the United States armed forces who were not
15 properly thanked or welcomed home following their military
16 service, March 30 of each year is designated as "Wyoming
17 Veterans Welcome Home Day." The day shall be appropriately
18 observed in the public schools of the state and by
19 organizations within the state. Additionally, it is
20 recommended that Wyoming communities host "Wyoming Veterans
21 Welcome Home Day" celebrations to ensure those members of
22 the United States armed forces can be properly thanked and
23 welcomed home.

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1 (b) The governor, not later than March 20 of each
2 year, shall issue a proclamation requesting proper
3 observance of Wyoming Veterans Welcome Home Day and
4 requesting military and veterans' organizations to work
5 with the boards of all Wyoming school districts to conduct
6 proper exercises in observation of the contributions and
7 sacrifices of Vietnam veterans and other veterans.

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9 (c) This section shall not affect commercial paper,
10 the making or execution of written agreements or judicial
11 proceedings, or authorize public schools, business or state
12 and local government offices to close.

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14 **Section 3.** This act is effective immediately upon
15 completion of all acts necessary for a bill to become law
16 as provided by Article 4, Section 8 of the Wyoming
17 Constitution.

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19

(END)