

ORIGINAL HOUSE  
BILL NO. 0177

ENROLLED ACT NO. 15, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SIXTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WYOMING  
2011 GENERAL SESSION

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

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

**Section 1.**

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

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

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

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

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

(v) As a result of the Gulf of Tonkin incidents on August 2 and 4, 1964, the United States overwhelmingly passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution (Public Law 99-408), on August 7, 1964, which effectively handed over the war-

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making powers to President Johnson until such time as "peace and security" had returned to Vietnam;

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

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

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

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

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

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

(xii) Upon their return home, members of the United States armed forces who served bravely and faithfully for the United States during the Vietnam War were caught in the crossfire of public debate about the involvement of the United States in the war. Many of these veterans were treated with disrespect and their leaders

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recommended they not wear their military uniform as they returned home;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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the United States armed forces can be properly thanked and welcomed home.

(b) The governor, not later than March 20 of each year, shall issue a proclamation requesting proper observance of Wyoming Veterans Welcome Home Day and requesting military and veterans' organizations to work with Wyoming school districts to observe the contributions and sacrifices of Vietnam veterans and other veterans.

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

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

(END)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Speaker of the House

\_\_\_\_\_  
President of the Senate

\_\_\_\_\_  
Governor

TIME APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby certify that this act originated in the House.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Clerk