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BILL



ANALYSIS

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Senate Bill 282 (as reported without amendment)
Sponsor: Senator John Pappageorge
Committee: Veterans, Military Affairs, and Homeland Security

(as passed by the Senate)

Date Completed: 5-9-11

RATIONALE

Over the course of the calendar year, Americans celebrate several civic holidays, such as Independence Day and Memorial Day, but some feel that those holidays have become too commercialized. A few years ago, an Oakland County judge and his young daughter struck upon the idea of commemorating American heritage and ideals by having a week-long celebration of the country's founding principles, historical figures, and symbols. They began promoting the idea of "Patriot Week", from September 11 through 17, and encouraged schools as well as religious and community organizations to participate in events based on a daily schedule. Over the last couple of years, Patriot Week activities have occurred in Michigan, as well as several other states and Washington, D.C. The Michigan Legislature has recognized Patriot Week through the adoption of resolutions in 2009 and 2010. It has been suggested that declaring September 11 through 17 as Patriot Week in statute would encourage people to promote and celebrate American ideals on a continuous basis.

CONTENT

The bill would create a new act to declare September 11 through 17 of each year as "Patriot Week" and encourage citizens, schools, and other entities to participate in Patriot Week.

Specifically, the bill states: "Recognizing that each generation needs to renew the spirit of America based on America's First Principles, key historical figures, founding documents, and symbols, the legislature declares that the period beginning on

September 11 through September 17 of each year shall be known as 'Patriot Week' which symbolically begins on September 11 and concludes on September 17, Constitution Day." The bill acknowledges the date of the signing of the U.S. Constitution, September 17, 1787, and that September 17 is recognized each year as "Constitution Day" throughout the United States.

The bill also would encourage "citizens, schools and other educational institutions, government agencies, municipalities, and nonprofit, religious, labor, community, and business organizations to recognize and participate in Patriot Week by honoring and celebrating the First Principles, key historical figures, founding documents, and symbols of America to renew the spirit of America."

The bill further states: "The legislature recognizes that understanding American history and America's First Principles are indispensable to the survival of our republic as a free people. In great reverence to the victims of the September 11, 2001 attacks, the legislature acknowledges that American citizens must take time to honor the First Principles, founders, documents, and symbols of their history."

The bill states, "Revolution, the rule of law, the social compact, equality, unalienable rights, and limited government are the First Principles upon which America was founded and flourishes." It identifies several historical figures as "[e]xceptional, visionary, and indispensable Americans", and lists certain documents, speeches, and *Marbury v Madison* (an early U.S. Supreme

Court decision) as "key documents that embody America's First Principles and have advanced American liberty". The bill also identifies a number of flags that "are key physical symbols of American history and freedom that should be studied and remembered by each American".

BACKGROUND

The following information comes from the Patriot Week website (www.patriotweek.org) and a Patriot Week brochure presented to the Senate Veterans, Military Affairs, and Homeland Security Committee.

According to the website, "Patriot Week renews America's spirit by celebrating the First Principles, Founding Fathers and other Patriots, vital documents and speeches, and flags that make America the greatest nation in world history." The celebration is anchored by the key dates of September 11 (the anniversary of the 2001 terrorist attacks, and sometimes known as Patriot Day) and September 17 (the anniversary of the 1787 signing of the U.S. Constitution, and widely recognized as Constitution Day).

In its inaugural year, 2009, Patriot Week had over 20 participants who engaged in a wide range of activities. This Michigan-based grassroots effort grew broadly in 2010, with activities occurring in nine states and the District of Columbia. The daily schedule for Patriot Week celebrations is based around common themes, with each commemorating a First Principle, founding fathers and/or other patriots who were key to promoting that principle, vital documents or speeches reflective of that principle, and flags from America's past and present that are emblematic of that principle.

ARGUMENTS

(Please note: The arguments contained in this analysis originate from sources outside the Senate Fiscal Agency. The Senate Fiscal Agency neither supports nor opposes legislation.)

Supporting Argument

The meaning of America's traditional civic holidays has been obscured by commercialism. Too often, the public emphasis of those holidays is retail sales on carpeting, cars, and appliances, rather than recognizing the nation's history and ideals. People celebrate these holidays by eating hot dogs and going to the beach, rather than

learning about and celebrating the country's principles and great leaders. Honoring America's First Principles, symbols, documents and speeches, and historical figures through Patriot Week activities is a new and growing trend. The idea of Patriot Week was developed in Michigan, by an Oakland County judge and his daughter, and it would be fitting to declare Patriot Week officially in the State. It also would set an example for other states to follow, and could help to promote the celebration of American ideals through Patriot Week activities in communities across the country. In addition, encouraging citizens, schools, communities, and various organizations to recognize and participate in Patriot Week, as the bill would do, would assist the Patriot Week founders and organizers in meeting their stated aim: "Renewing the Spirit of America".

Legislative Analyst: Patrick Affholter

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

Fiscal Analyst: Joe Carrasco

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.