

SENATE BILL 1745

By Crowe

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 15,
relative to Native American Heritage Day.

WHEREAS, Native Americans are the descendants of the aboriginal, indigenous, and native people who were the original inhabitants of the United States and Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Native Americans have volunteered to serve in the United States Armed Forces and have served with valor in all of the nation's military actions from the Revolutionary War through the present day, and in most of those actions, more Native Americans per capita served in the Armed Forces than any other group of Americans; and

WHEREAS, Native Americans have made distinct and significant contributions to the United States, Tennessee, and the rest of the world in many fields, including agriculture, medicine, music, language, and art, and Native Americans have distinguished themselves as inventors, entrepreneurs, spiritual leaders, and scholars; and

WHEREAS, Native Americans should be recognized for their contributions to the United States and Tennessee as local and national leaders, artists, athletes, and scholars; and

WHEREAS, statewide recognition of the contributions that Native Americans have made to the fabric of American society will afford an opportunity for all Tennesseans to demonstrate their respect and admiration of Native Americans for their important contributions to the political, cultural, and economic life of this country and state; and

WHEREAS, statewide recognition of the contributions that Native Americans have made to this nation will encourage self-esteem, pride, and self-awareness in Native Americans of all ages; and

WHEREAS, designation of the Friday following Thanksgiving of each year as Native American Heritage Day will underscore the government-to-government relationship between the Tennessee and Native American governments; and

WHEREAS, designation of Native American Heritage Day will encourage public elementary and secondary schools in Tennessee to enhance understanding of Native Americans by providing curricula and classroom instruction focusing on the achievements and contributions of Native Americans to this nation; 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 as a new section:

The day after Thanksgiving Day each year shall be observed as "Native American Heritage Day", to be proclaimed as that day by the governor, to encourage the people of this state and interested groups and organizations to observe the day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities, including activities relating to:

- (1) The historical status of Native American tribal governments as well as the present day status of Native Americans;
- (2) The cultures, traditions, and languages of Native Americans; and
- (3) The rich Native American cultural legacy that all Americans enjoy today.

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