

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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HOUSE BILL 701

Short Title: Adopt Lafayette Day. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Charles Smith, Blackwell, Wheatley, and Colvin (Primary Sponsors).

For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

Referred to: State and Local Government, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

April 3, 2025

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT ADOPTING THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF MAY OF EACH YEAR AS
LAFAYETTE DAY.

Whereas, North Carolina cities and towns from the Virginia line down to the South Carolina line – including Murfreesboro, Jackson, Halifax, Enfield, Rocky Mount, Raleigh, and Fayetteville – held festive bicentennial commemorations from February 26 through March 5, 2025; and

Whereas, the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence Chapter of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution is celebrating the Bicentennial of Lafayette's Farewell Tour of America in 2024-2025; and

Whereas, Lafayette is known as the Hero of Two Worlds, America and France, and this celebration honors the visit to America of the last of the surviving Major Generals of the American Revolution; and

Whereas, in 1777 during the American Revolutionary War, the young Marquis de Lafayette first rendered service to America by traveling from France to give aid to the colonies fighting for their independence, becoming one of George Washington's most trusted major generals and considered by many to be his "adopted son"; and

Whereas, during Lafayette's service, undertaken at his own expense, he proved to be indispensable to the cause of American independence in both his military and diplomatic roles; and

Whereas, during the American Revolutionary War, the 2nd North Carolina Regiment fought at Brandywine (1777) and Monmouth Courthouse (1778), two of the numerous battles in which Lafayette led other American troops; and

Whereas, General Lafayette commanded an American infantry division during the Battle of Yorktown, in which his actions were key to the defeat and surrender of British General Cornwallis, a decisive American victory that caused England to recognize the United States of America as a sovereign Nation; and

Whereas, Lafayette was a lifelong advocate for human rights, religious liberty, racial equality, and civil rights, relinquishing his own noble title during the French Revolution and co-authoring with Thomas Jefferson France's Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen; and



Whereas, Lafayette was an early and consistent voice against slavery in France and in America, where he sought to persuade American friends, including George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison, to eradicate this evil; and

Whereas, Lafayette supported women's rights in matters of education and divorce, endorsing and promoting the views of activists like Frances (Fanny) Wright; and

Whereas, during Lafayette's Farewell Tour of America in 1824-1825, he visited the then-24 states, including North Carolina, and addressed the ideals of liberty, justice, and democracy; and

Whereas, the State Assembly of North Carolina changed the name of the area known as "Campellton" to "Fayetteville" in honor of Lafayette on May 17, 1783, thus becoming the first state in America to do so; and

Whereas, the State of North Carolina should adopt an official North Carolina Lafayette Day; Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Chapter 103 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 103-19. Lafayette Day.

The seventeenth day of May of each year is designated as Lafayette Day in the State of North Carolina."

SECTION 2. This act is effective when it becomes law.