

HB25-1266 Colorado American Indian Recognition Day

Sponsors: Representatives Katie Stewart (HD 59), Lorena Garcia (HD 35)

The bill designates Colorado American Indian Recognition Day as an observed state holiday on the second Monday of October.

HB25-1266 was written in collaboration with the Southern Ute Indian Tribe, the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, and a variety of enrolled tribal members and community leaders across the state.

Why is it called Colorado American Indian Recognition Day?

Colorado - As the legislative declaration expresses, this holiday is specifically honoring the Southern Ute Indian Tribe, the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, and the other federally recognized tribes with historical ties to Colorado.

American Indian - This terminology was a major discussion during several rounds of stakeholder meetings. Consensus was reached to use 'American Indian,' in order to be in line with the language used in federal law. With current threats to American Indians' sovereignty and rights, many stakeholders expressed that they wanted to ensure that Colorado law uses the correct technical language to continue to uphold their unique legal status.

Recognition Day - Some states use 'heritage day', but stakeholders proposed and decided on 'Recognition day' because it acknowledges that American Indians are not just history; they are contemporary, diverse communities who continue to contribute to Colorado in a myriad of ways.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Why is it an observed holiday, not a legal holiday?

An observed holiday gives state employers and schools the choice about whether to have a day off or not. Designating this day as an observed holiday means public schools will have the opportunity to make this an in-school education day about American Indian history, heritage, and culture, as some school districts like Durango public schools already do.

Does this overlap with Mother Cabrini Day?

No, Mother Cabrini Day is on the 1st Monday in October. This holiday is on the 2nd Monday.