

## CHAPTER 253

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**COURTS**

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## SENATE BILL 23-282

BY SENATOR(S) Gonzales;  
also REPRESENTATIVE(S) Weissman and Soper.

**AN ACT****CONCERNING THE CREATION OF "JURY APPRECIATION DAY".**

*Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:*

**SECTION 1. Legislative declaration.** (1) The general assembly finds and declares that:

(a) The jury system is a cornerstone of Colorado's form of government and is therefore a matter of statewide concern;

(b) The jury service system is important to democracy because of the unbiased, impartial viewpoints that can be derived from our citizens who are selected from a wide cross-section of society;

(c) Serving on a jury promotes civic participation, as it is the most direct and impactful way for citizens to participate in and connect to the state's system of government;

(d) Jury service is a civic duty, and jurors make important sacrifices regarding personal time, family, and professional life to devote the necessary time to serve as jurors;

(e) Jury service is important, and it benefits all residents of the state;

(f) Our country's founders included the right to be tried by a jury of our peers, a safeguard against tyranny, in the Bill of Rights;

(g) The first jury trial in the American colonies was held in Plymouth, Massachusetts, in 1630; and

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*Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material added to existing law; dashes through words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law and such material is not part of the act.*

(h) September fifth commemorates a 1670 jury trial in which a jury acquitted William Penn, who was facing the death penalty after preaching to Quakers, a banned religion in England at the time. The jury reached their verdict despite intimidation and imprisonment by the English trial court, and the jury's independence and integrity were upheld by an appellate court.

(2) The general assembly further finds and declares that:

(a) A trial by a jury of one's peers in both civil and criminal cases has historically been part of the American legal system's promise of impartial justice, but in Colorado's history, not all citizens have been able equally to serve on juries due to race, ethnicity, or gender;

(b) Racial disparities in jury pools have given some Americans reason to fear the outcomes of jury trials; and

(c) Although access to jury service is more equitable than in our past, concerns remain in the present day about neutral application of common law or statutory law concerning the exclusion of certain potential jurors from juries.

**SECTION 2.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** 24-11-116 as follows:

**24-11-116. Juror Appreciation Day.** (1) THE FIFTH DAY OF SEPTEMBER IN EACH YEAR, THE SAME BEING THE ANNIVERSARY OF ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS JURY VERDICTS IN UNITED STATES HISTORY, IS KNOWN AS "JURY APPRECIATION DAY". APPROPRIATE OBSERVANCE BY SUITABLE MEANS MAY BE HELD BY THE PUBLIC, BY ALL JURY COMMISSIONERS, AND IN ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF THE STATE TO RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF JURY SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY, THE IMPORTANCE OF JURY TRIALS TO THE STATE, AND THE GREAT CONTRIBUTION JURY TRIALS MAKE TO THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM. ALL EFFORTS AND UNDERTAKINGS IN CELEBRATING JURY APPRECIATION DAY MUST BE IN HARMONY WITH THE GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE DAY SO ESTABLISHED.

(2) ANNUALLY, THE GOVERNOR SHALL ISSUE A PROCLAMATION CALLING FOR THE RECOGNITION OF JURY APPRECIATION DAY.

(3) ON JURY APPRECIATION DAY, EACH STATE AGENCY SHALL REMAIN STAFFED AT A MINIMUM LEVEL TO CONDUCT THE USUAL OPERATIONS OF THE AGENCY.

(4) A HOLIDAY ALLOWED PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION IS IN LIEU OF A LEGAL HOLIDAY DESCRIBED IN SECTION 24-11-101 (1). THE TOTAL NUMBER OF LEGAL HOLIDAYS IN A STATE FISCAL YEAR AVAILABLE TO AN EMPLOYEE OF A STATE AGENCY IS NOT CHANGED BY THIS SECTION.

**SECTION 3. Act subject to petition - effective date.** This act takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on the day following the expiration of the ninety-day period after final adjournment of the general assembly; except that, if a referendum petition is filed pursuant to section 1 (3) of article V of the state constitution against this act or an item, section, or part of this act within such period, then the act, item, section, or part will not take effect unless approved by the people at the general election to be

held in November 2024 and, in such case, will take effect on the date of the official declaration of the vote thereon by the governor.

Approved: May 24, 2023