

ASSEMBLY TOURISM, GAMING AND THE ARTS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO ASSEMBLY, No. 5251

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: SEPTEMBER 14, 2026

The Assembly Tourism, Gaming and the Arts Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 5251.

As amended by the committee, this bill, to be known as the “New Jersey History Day Act,” designates December 18 of each year as “New Jersey History Day” to acknowledge the contributions of the State and its municipalities to American history and to cultivate civic identity, community engagement, and historical understanding among residents.

Instruction in State and local history strengthens civic identity, community engagement, and historical understanding. New Jersey has a rich history that is well-suited for incorporation into American history courses. On December 18th, 1787, New Jersey became the third state to ratify the United States Constitution and later became the first state to ratify the Bill of Rights. The State’s history reflects a diverse and evolving population, contributing to its civic, cultural, and economic development. While current law requires the teaching of New Jersey history, there is no designated Statewide observance to highlight and celebrate such history.

As amended, this bill respectfully requests that the Governor issue a proclamation recognizing December 18 of each year as “New Jersey History Day.”

As amended, the bill also permits each school district to annually observe “New Jersey History Day” by commemorating the State’s history through appropriate instructional activities aligned with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards in Social Studies. Such activities will, to the greatest extent practicable, include:

- (1) instruction on significant events, places, and figures in New Jersey history;
- (2) exploration of local or municipal history, including the community in which the school is located;
- (3) student projects, including, but not limited to, research presentations, exhibits, performances, or digital media;
- (4) visits to local historic sites;
- (5) guest speakers;

- (6) walking tours or community-based projects; and
- (7) public exhibitions of student work.

The bill provides that the New Jersey Historical Commission, in consultation with the Department of Education, will develop and distribute resource materials for school districts, promote Statewide participation in the celebration of “New Jersey History Day,” and provide grants to support appropriate programs and activities to observe “New Jersey History Day.”

As reported and amended by the committee, Assembly Bill No. 5251 is identical to Senate Bill No. 4307 (1R), which was also reported by the committee on this date.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments clarify that the Governor is respectfully requested to issue a proclamation recognizing December 18 of each year as “New Jersey History Day.” The committee amendments also clarify that school districts may annually observe “New Jersey History Day” by commemorating the State’s history through appropriate instructional activities aligned with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards in Social Studies. The committee amendments remove the requirement for the Department of Education to provide guidelines and information to school districts for use in planning the activities in observance of “New Jersey History Day.”