

National Day of Reason

The National Day of Reason that, according to the proposed Resolution 357, focuses “on the central importance of reason, critical thought, the scientific method, and free inquiry to resolving social problems and promoting the welfare of humankind.” The National Day of Reason historically occurs on the first Thursday in May, so the exact date changes from year to year.

In 2026, the National Day of Reason will be celebrated on **May 4th**. It takes place annually on the first Thursday in May during the Secular Week of Action, in which people across the country engage in activities to make positive changes in their communities based on reason and compassion.

History

The National Day of Reason was first created by the American Humanist Association in 2003 in response to the federally endorsed National Day of Prayer. The organizers and supporters of the National Day of Reason consider the day a counterweight to the National Day of Prayer, which they argue violates the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and the principal idea of separation of church and state. However, unlike the Day of Prayer, the National Day of Reason is not enshrined in any federal legislation. There have since been attempts to introduce the National Day of Reason in the US House of Representatives as a federal event, yet no resolution has been adopted. Though most activities around the day are organized by nonreligious people, the day is observed by nontheists and theists alike in celebration of reason and science.

Observances

Observation of the National Day of Reason may vary from group to group and individual to individual. Some people or groups may hold protests, seminars, luncheons, and other social events to commemorate the holiday. Others may choose to donate blood, volunteer locally, or organize food drives. Various states might also adopt proclamations or resolutions in celebration of the day.

Impact on the Workplace

The National Day of Reason is not a public holiday, therefore, unless indicated otherwise, regular business hours at companies and in governments are adhered to on this date. As with other days of significance, some employees may choose to observe this day by taking time off work.

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