

**SUBJECT:** Recognizing Texas Prayer Day

**COMMITTEE:** State Cultural and Recreational Resources — favorable, without amendment

**VOTE:** 5 ayes — Hilderbran, Geren, B. Cook, Kuempel, Phillips  
0 nays  
2 absent — Bailey, Dukes

**SENATE VOTE:** On final passage, May 6 — 31-0, on Local and Uncontested Calendar

**WITNESSES:** No public hearing

**BACKGROUND:** The National Day of Prayer (NDP) is an annual event for Americans of all faiths to take time to pray for our nation and its leaders. Public prayer and national days of prayer have a long standing history in America. The First Continental Congress called for days of fasting and prayer as early as 1775 when they were trying to establish our nation. President Lincoln proclaimed such a day in 1863 to pray for the divided nation during the civil war.

The NDP was established by Congress in 1952 and signed into law by President Truman as a day to reaffirm the role of prayer in society and to honor the religious diversity and freedom Americans cherish. In 1988, the law was amended and signed by President Reagan, which designated the NDP as the first Thursday in May.

Every year, the president signs a proclamation encouraging Americans to pray on this day. Last year, all 50 state governors signed similar proclamations. This year, Gov. Perry proclaimed May 1 as a Day of Prayer in Texas.

**DIGEST:** SB 1415 would add Government Code, sec. 662.050 to establish the first Thursday in May of each year as Texas Prayer Day, to coincide with the National Day of Prayer, designated as a day on which the people of Texas may turn to God in prayer and meditation at places of worship, in groups, and as individuals.

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The bill would take effect September 1, 2003.