

Senate Bill 458

Sponsored by Senator PROZANSKI (at the request of Jyoti Barnhart, Zoe Littlebury, Dawn Turbin and Elizabeth Wyley) (Pre-session filed.)

SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced**.

Designates February 14 of each year as Oregon Statehood Day.

A BILL FOR AN ACT

1 Relating to a day to commemorate Oregon statehood.

2 Whereas from the temperate, forested northwest coast to the harsh landscape of the high desert,
3 the abundant natural resources of this state have sustained its inhabitants for thousands of years;
4 and
5

6 Whereas the arrival in November 1805 of the Lewis and Clark Expedition at the mouth of the
7 Columbia River paved the way for American settlement of the region; and

8 Whereas by 1811 John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Trade Company had established Fort Astoria,
9 the first permanent American settlement in the area that came to be known as Oregon Territory;
10 and

11 Whereas the first white settlers in the region faced extreme hardships and even death in making
12 the journey on the Oregon Trail, the survivors overcoming unforgiving terrain and rampant sickness
13 and disease, the latter of which forever changed the population of the native peoples; and

14 Whereas even amidst the hardships, early settlers banded together to cultivate the fertile
15 farmland of this state, build missions and harvest the abundant and valuable natural resources; and

16 Whereas by the middle part of the 19th century, the population of United States citizens who
17 had settled in Oregon was growing quickly; and

18 Whereas in 1846, the United States and Great Britain signed the Oregon Treaty, which desig-
19 nated the 49th parallel as the international border, making it possible for the Congress of the United
20 States to create Oregon Territory; and

21 Whereas growing industries in other parts of the United States created demand for Oregon ag-
22 riculture and timber products; and

23 Whereas the Oregon Provisional Government was established in 1843, followed shortly by the
24 arrival of the United States Army in Oregon Territory in 1849; and

25 Whereas without enabling legislation from Congress and in a desire to control their own gov-
26 ernment, Oregonians voted in June 1857 to hold a constitutional convention, assembling in Salem
27 to draft a governing document for this state; and

28 Whereas in June 1858 residents of Oregon Territory elected officials as provided in their new
29 Constitution; and

30 Whereas granting Oregon statehood was a complex question in Congress due to the fragile bal-
31 ance of power in the buildup to the Civil War; and

NOTE: Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter [*italic and bracketed*] is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

1 Whereas in 1857 Oregonians voted to disallow slavery in Oregon Territory even as they voted
2 against permitting residency of freed African Americans; and

3 Whereas on February 12, 1859, Congress passed the bill granting statehood to Oregon; and

4 Whereas on February 14, 1859, the bill was signed by President James Buchanan; and

5 Whereas the news that Oregon had been granted statehood was relayed by telegraph to St.
6 Louis, by stagecoach to San Francisco, by steamer to Portland and by messenger on horseback to
7 Salem, where it reached Governor Joseph Lane nearly a month later; now, therefore,

8 **Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:**

9 **SECTION 1.** February 14 of each year is designated as Oregon Statehood Day to com-
10 memorate the date on which Oregon became the 33rd state in the United States of America.

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