



MISSOURI SENATE
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Delbert Scott
28th Senate District

Capitol Building, Room 416
Jefferson City, MO 65101

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Contact: Debbie Poire
(573) 751-8793

Honoring Our Nation's Symbol

You can see our country's great symbol waving its stars and stripes throughout the year. However, June 14 (the anniversary of the official adoption of The Stars and Stripes) is a day set aside to honor our nation's flag and what it means to the citizens of the United States of America.

The history of our nation's flag runs deep, with the first official version making its debut on June 14, 1777. Each of the 13 stars and stripes on this flag represented a colony in our young nation. Approximately 18 years later (May 1, 1795), a 15-star flag was created to reflect the admission of Vermont and Kentucky. This flag was the only U.S. flag to have more than 13 stripes, and it was this version that was immortalized by Francis Scott Key — author of our national anthem, "the Star-Spangled Banner."

Since that time, 25 versions of our nation's flag were created to include new states added to our country. Congress realized that the addition of a new star *and* stripe for each new state was impractical, so it passed the Flag Act of 1818 which returned the flag design to 13 stripes and specified the number of stars in comparison to the number of states in our nation.

The last state to be admitted to our country was Hawaii on Aug. 21, 1959. With the inclusion of this 50th state, the 27th flag of the United States became our official flag on July 4, 1960. Our current flag, under which nine presidents have served, is arranged with stars in nine rows staggered horizontally and eleven rows of stars staggered vertically.

The arrangement and colors of our nation's flag have specific meanings, too — going back to our Founding Fathers' beliefs, values, and sovereignty of the new nation. According to "Our Flag" (published in 1989 by the U.S. House of Representatives), Charles Thompson, Secretary of the Continental Congress, stated:

"The colors of the pales (the horizontal stripes) are those used in the flag of the

United States of America; White signifies purity and innocence, Red, hardiness & valour, and Blue, (the broad band above the stripes) signifies valiance, perseverance & justice.”

And from another book about our country’s flag, published in 1977 by the U.S. House of Representatives:

“The star is a symbol of the heavens and the divine goal to which man has aspired from time immemorial; the stripe is symbolic of the rays of light emanating from the sun.”

Inspired by more than three decades of state and local U.S. flag celebrations, Flag Day was officially established through a proclamation by President Woodrow Wilson on May 30, 1916. And while the day was celebrated in various ways for several years, it was not until Aug. 3, 1949, when President Harry S. Truman signed an Act of Congress designating June 14 of each year as National Flag Day.

I hope you join me this Flag Day in honoring our nation’s symbol of *liberty* and *justice*. If you have any questions about this or any other topic, please feel free to contact me at (573) 751-8793 or by e-mail at: delbertscott@senate.mo.gov.

Senator Delbert Scott represents the people of Barton, Benton, Cedar, Dallas, Henry, Hickory, Pettis, Polk and St. Clair counties in the Missouri Senate.

