



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

Wes Shoemyer
18th Senate District

CAPITOL BUILDING, ROOM 434
JEFFERSON CITY, MO 65101

**A Weekly Column for the
Week of June 14, 2010**

**Capitol Office
(573) 751-7852**

Honoring Our Flag & Our Fathers

JEFFERSON CITY – All across Missouri and in states throughout our country, citizens this week have been flying the American flag in honor of Flag Day, June 14. I know a lot of folks observe Flag Day because I’ve seen the evidence traveling throughout the district, but I’m not sure people know much about the history of Flag Day.

It all goes back to 1777, when the Continental Congress adopted the First Flag Resolution on June 14 of that year to recognize the adoption of the American flag. For decades after that, Americans celebrated the American flag and all it represents on July 4th, but there was no day set aside specifically to honor the flag of our nation. A school teacher in Waubeka, Wisconsin, is generally credited as the first to promote Flag Day.

Bernard Cigrand, now known as the “Father of Flag Day,” held the first unofficial observance at his school in 1885. Cigrand delivered patriotic speeches across the country urging Americans to adopt June 14 as Flag Day. He later became president of the American Flag Day Association and the National Flag Day Society. The Chicago Tribune once wrote that Cigrand “almost single-handedly” established Flag Day. Cigrand, however, was not alone in his efforts.

In 1889, school principal George Bolch celebrated the anniversary of the 1777 First Flag Resolution at his New York City school.

In 1893, a descendant of Benjamin Franklin, Elizabeth Gillespie of Pennsylvania, tried to get a resolution passed naming June 14th as Flag Day. In 1937, Pennsylvania became the first state to make Flag Day a legal holiday.

President Woodrow Wilson issued a proclamation in 1916 requesting June 14 become National Flag Day. In 1927, President Calvin Coolidge issued a second proclamation for Flag

Day, but Congress did not approve the idea until 1949. Missouri native Harry Truman signed the Flag Day resolution into law on August 3, 1949.

The week of June 14 is now designated National Flag Week, in which all U.S. citizens are urged to fly the flag for the entire week. It is also to be flown at all governmental buildings for the week.

I commemorated Flag Day this year by attending celebrations in both Palmyra and Kahoka. I shared my thoughts about this important observance at the Clark County High School in Kahoka. I know times are tough right now, but to see all of the kids at the parade in Kahoka as well as all of the people who turned out to celebrate our flag tells me things are not all bad.

I also hope you remembered to call or visit your Dad on Fathers' Day. I have the privilege of working with my father, Robert Shoemyer, every day on our farm, so I get to tell him all the time how much I appreciate his guidance and support. I suppose the best way I can thank my Dad is by trying to be as good of a father to my kids as he was to me.

If you have any questions or comments about these or any other issues give my Capitol office a call at (573) 751-7852, send me an email at wes.shoemyer@senate.mo.gov, or drop a line to Room 434, State Capitol, 201 West Capitol Ave., Jefferson City, MO 65101.