

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2021 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

Senate Bill 543

BY SENATORS GRADY, PHILLIPS, SMITH, CAPUTO,
ROBERTS, BEACH, CLEMENTS, ROMANO, LINDSAY, AND
UNGER

[Introduced March 3, 2021; referred
to the Committee on Government Organization]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new section,
2 designated §10-3-3, relating to establishing a medal of excellence in honor of Chuck
3 Yeager, known as the Chuck Yeager Mountain State Medal of Excellence; providing a
4 process by which to annually provide this award to a West Virginian who demonstrates
5 exceptional leadership or innovation; and establishing other related criteria.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 3. MONUMENTS, TABLETS AND MEMORIALS.

§10-3-3. Chuck Yeager Mountain State Medal of Excellence award.

1 (a) Legislative findings. - The West Virginia Legislature recognizes the many
2 achievements that the great General Chuck Yeager achieved for the State of West Virginia. On
3 Oct. 14, 1947, at the age of 24, General Yeager became the first person in the world to fly beyond
4 the speed of sound, paving the way for generations of pilots to achieve supersonic flight for
5 decades to come. The famed pilot's flying adventures continued through his 89th birthday, when
6 he broke the sound barrier yet again in an F-15 operated by another pilot in 2012, celebrating the
7 65th anniversary of the day he first flew beyond Mach 1. Sadly, General Chuck Yeager passed
8 away on December 7, 2020, at the age of 97. In commemorating the many achievements of
9 General Yeager, the West Virginia Legislature believes that the establishment of the "Chuck
10 Yeager Mountain State Medal of Excellence" award provides a unique opportunity to honor West
11 Virginians who demonstrate the same spirit of achievement as General Yeager.

12 (b) Establishment of award. - The name of the medal and award program established by
13 this section shall be known as the "Chuck Yeager Mountain State Medal of Excellence." This
14 award shall be awarded annually to a West Virginian who demonstrates exceptional leadership,
15 innovation, entrepreneurship, or creativity in their career, their personal life, or through their
16 community service. The award shall be given on an annual basis by the West Virginia State
17 Senate, with the Senate having the discretion to establish a time and place to give the award to
18 the recipient. The family of the recipient shall be invited to attend the ceremony.

19 (c) Criteria. – The award may be given to any West Virginian who has demonstrated
20 exceptional leadership, entrepreneurship, or creativity. The recipient shall be a West Virginian by
21 birth, or someone who has relocated to West Virginia in the past three or more years and who
22 has made a positive impact on their community and state. The award may not be given to a
23 currently serving member of the Legislature.

24 (d) Effective date. – This section shall take effect on July 1, 2021, with the first award being
25 given on January 1, 2022, with an annual award to occur every year thereafter.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to create the “Chuck Yeager Mountain State Medal of Excellence” award.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.