

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2021 REGULAR SESSION

Committee Substitute

for

Senate Bill 543

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

[Originating in the Committee on Government
Organization; reported on March 26, 2021]

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

13 (b) Establishment of award. — The name of the medal and award program established by
14 this section shall be known as the Chuck Yeager Mountain State Medal of Excellence. This award
15 shall be awarded annually to a West Virginian who demonstrates exceptional leadership,
16 innovation, entrepreneurship, or creativity in his or her career or personal life, or through
17 community service. The award shall be given on an annual basis by the West Virginia State

18 Senate, with the Senate having the discretion to establish a time and place to present the award
19 to the recipient. The family of the recipient shall be invited to attend the ceremony.

20 (c) *Criteria.* — The award may be given to any West Virginian who has demonstrated
21 exceptional leadership, entrepreneurship, or creativity. The recipient shall be a West Virginian by
22 birth, or someone who has resided continuously in West Virginia for at least three years prior to
23 being given the award, and who has made a positive impact on his or her community and the
24 state. The award may not be given to a currently serving member of the Legislature.

25 (d) *Effective date.* — This section shall take effect on July 1, 2021, with the first award
26 being given on January 1, 2022, with an annual award to be made every year thereafter.