

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2026 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

Senate Bill 771

**FISCAL
NOTE**

By Senator M. Maynard

[Introduced February 5, 2026; referred
to the Committee on Government Organization; and
then to the Committee on Finance]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding a new section,
2 designated §5A-1-13, relating to establishing a non-denominational chapel within the West
3 Virginia Capitol building; and designating the Secretary of the Department of
4 Administration with the oversight, maintenance, and operation of the chapel.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 1. DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION.

§5A-1-13. West Virginia Capitol Chapel Act.

1 (a) Short Title -- This act shall be known and cited as the "West Virginia Capitol Chapel
2 Act".

3 (b) Purpose -- The purpose of this act is to establish a non-denominational chapel within
4 the West Virginia Capitol building to provide a space for prayer, meditation, and religious
5 observance, accommodating all faiths and beliefs.

6 (c) Establishment of a Capitol Chapel --

7 (1) The state of West Virginia shall designate and maintain a chapel within the West
8 Virginia Capitol building for the purpose of religious reflection, prayer, and meditation.

9 (2) The chapel shall be open to all individuals regardless of religious affiliation and shall be
10 used in a manner that upholds the principles of religious freedom as guaranteed by the First
11 Amendment of the United States Constitution.

12 (d) Management and Oversight --

13 (1) The Department of Administration shall oversee the establishment, maintenance, and
14 operation of the chapel.

15 (2) A Capitol Chapel Advisory Committee shall be formed to provide guidance on its use,
16 ensuring inclusivity and adherence to non-discriminatory practices. This committee shall consist
17 of: (A) One representative from each of the following: One member from the West Virginia House
18 of Delegates; (B) One member from the West Virginia Senate; (C) Member of the public; (D) The
19 Secretary of Administration or their designee, serving as the chair.

20 (e) *Funding and Maintenance* --21 (1) The chapel shall be funded through appropriations from the state budget, private
22 donations, and grants as deemed appropriate.23 (2) No state funds may be used for the promotion of any specific religion, and the space
24 shall remain neutral in its religious representation.25 (f) *Usage Guidelines* --26 (1) The chapel shall be open during regular Capitol business hours and accessible to all
27 visitors, legislators, and employees.28 (2) Scheduling for organized services or events shall be managed through the Department
29 of Administration on a non-discriminatory basis.30 (3) No religious group may have exclusive rights to the chapel, and all uses shall align with
31 the principles of inclusivity and respect for diverse beliefs.32 (g) *Effective Date* --33 This act shall take effect immediately upon passage.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to establish a non-denominational chapel within the West Virginia Capitol building.

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