

“Chairman Peterson, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Craig, and members of the Senate General Government Budget Committee, good morning and thank you for this opportunity to provide proponent testimony on Senate Bill 337. My name is Frank Hickman and I am joined by Bill Rietz, We represent the Rutherford B. Hayes Heritage Committee in Delaware.

”Our goal this morning is to provide clear evidence why we believe that October 4th should be declared “President Rutherford B. Hayes Day” by the State of Ohio.

Let us begin!

Rutherford Birchard Hayes, (born in Delaware three months after his father had died), was a lawyer, a Civil War Veteran, and a politician. He served as the 19th president of the United States from 1877 to 1881, after serving in the U.S. House of Representatives and as governor of Ohio for three terms.

(Some notable events and accomplishments during Hayes’ life.)

(Education)

Hayes attended Kenyon College in Gambier graduating as Valedictorian (by the way he often walked to school - Delaware to Gambier – a distance of 38 miles! After Kenyon he attended Harvard Law School where he earned his Juris Doctorate degree.

(Work History)

After Harvard Law he took work in Cincinnati – where he served as a criminal defense attorney. His work included defending fugitive slaves - and defending a fugitive slave, Rosetta Armstaead, was one of his most famous cases.

(Military Service)

At the start of the Civil War, Hayes left his fledgling legal and political career and volunteered with the 23rd Ohio Volunteer Infantry here in Columbus. He was sworn in as a Major in 1861. He served with the 23rd throughout the war. Hayes earned a reputation for leading from the front and exhibiting unusual bravery in the face of the enemy. By war's end Hayes had been breveted to Major General. Hayes was wounded five times and he had four horses shot out from under him. He was recognized by General Ulysses Grant for both his leadership and his heroism.

(Political Activities)

Hayes was a Lincoln supporter and strong abolitionist. He was appointed and later elected Cincinnati Solicitor. He served in the US House of Representatives from Ohio for 2 terms and as Ohio Governor for 3 terms. During his time as Governor suffrage was expanded and he was able to secure Ohio's ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, which guaranteed black male suffrage. Governor Hayes was also responsible for starting a state Agricultural and Mechanical College. Today we know that school as "The Ohio State University"!.

As the third President from Ohio, Hayes oversaw the end of Reconstruction, and attempted to reconcile the divisions left over from the Civil War. Hayes's administration was influenced by his belief in equal treatment without regard to wealth, social standing, or race.

President Hayes was asked by the country of Paraguay to arbitrate a land dispute that came about after they were defeated in a war with Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay and they had lost their sovereign territory. In 1878 Hayes found in favor of Paraguay and awarded them 60 percent of their former land. In gratitude, Paraguay today has a holiday, a province, a town, a museum, and a soccer team all named in Hayes' honor.

It has been written that, as President, his greatest achievement was to restore popular faith in the presidency after the assassination of Abraham Lincoln.

(Retirement)

- In retirement Hayes was dedicated to serving the public as a private citizen and philanthropist, the ex-president delivered numerous speeches and patriotic addresses; he championed many educational, humanitarian, and reform causes.
- Continuing to manifest an interest in education, Hayes served as trustee of The Ohio State University, Western Reserve University, Ohio Wesleyan University, and Mount Union College.

Rutherford B. Hayes overcame a great deal of hardship to establish a strong and lasting legacy. His was a life lived to its fullest!

Let us now honor him by naming October 4th as President Rutherford B. Hayes Day!

Thank you.

Some Selected Quotes from Rutherford B. Hayes

“Conscience is the authentic voice of God to you”

“He serves his party best who serves his Country best”

“I am not liked as a President by the politicians in office, in the press, or in Congress. But I am content to abide the judgement the sober second thoughts of the people.”

