

**IN THE SECOND MEETING OF THE FOURTH
SESSION OF THE SIXTH PARLIAMENT OF
THE FOURTH REPUBLIC OF GHANA**



**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE
ON DEFENCE AND INTERIOR**

**ON THE
PUBLIC HOLIDAYS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2016**

JULY, 2016

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Public Holidays (Amendment) Bill, 2016 was laid in Parliament by the Hon. Minister for the Interior, Mr. Mark Owen Woyongo on Wednesday, 17th May, 2016 in accordance with Article 75 of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana.

The Bill was accordingly referred to the Committee on Defence and Interior for consideration and report pursuant to Orders 156 and 158 of the Standing Orders of the Parliament of Ghana.

1.1 The Committee met with the Hon. Deputy Minister for the Interior and his officials and thoroughly deliberated on the provisions of the Bill.

1.2 The Committee is grateful to the Hon. Minister and his officials for attending upon it and presenting information which aided deliberations on the Bill.

2.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Your Committee referred to the following documents during its deliberations:

- i. The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana
- ii. The Standing Orders of the Parliament of Ghana
- iv. Public Holidays Act, 2001 (Act 601)

3.0 BACKGROUND

The State of the Nation Address to this august House on 19th February, 2009, indicated the then government's desire to have the 21st day of September each year declared and celebrated as Founder's Day in honour of the first President of Ghana. Subsequently each year, the day has been declared a public holiday by the issuance of an Executive Instrument by H.E the President.

In 2009, Government decided to bring before Parliament a Bill seeking to amend the Public Holidays Act 2001, (Act 601) to include in the Schedule, the 21st Day of September as Founder's Day and a statutory holiday. Though gazetted and submitted to Parliament, the said Bill was not taken in the life of that Parliament. The Public Holidays Amendment Bill, 2016, hereby seeks consideration and passage into law.

4.0 OBJECTIVE OF THE BILL

The Bill seeks to amend the Public Holidays Act 2001 (Act 601) to include in the Schedule, the 21st day of September as a public holiday to be known as Founder's Day.

4.1 SPECIFIC PROVISIONS OF THE BILL

The Bill seeks to amend the Schedule to Act 601 by inserting after "Republic Day (1st July)" of "Founder's Day (21st September)".

5.0 COMMITTEE'S OBSERVATIONS

Born on September 21, 1909, at Nkroful in the Western Region of the then Gold Coast, the first president of Ghana, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah is recognized in history as a great man, and more specifically a great Pan-Africanist of no mean repute. The African Union has erected a statue to his honour at Addis Ababa and he has received other recognitions in Africa and globally.

5.1 Arguably an important day in the nation's calendar, a day when we remember the 1st President of the nation, the Committee debated extensively as to whether he is indeed the founder of Ghana or there were others, for instance other members of the 'Big Six' who equally deserve to be recognized as Founders. The Committee observed that there are others who gave birth to the vision that led to independent Ghana and who contributed to the leadership and growth of the nation. None of the achievements for which Ghana has become known would have happened without the foresight of the fore bearers of the nation, who set out with the express intention of developing a nation which would provide a home which gives security, hope and joy to all. We owe them a debt of gratitude as without them this nation simply would not exist. To honour the 1st President each year is thus welcome.

5.2 The Committee observed that in setting aside this day, we celebrate our many achievements, individually and collectively. It is an important occasion for the whole nation to remember that we are a great and strong nation, as the whole is stronger than the sum of its parts.

In celebrating the Day, we demonstrate a pledge and resolve to move this nation forward. We must celebrate the day as a nation that has stood the test of time and which has a great history.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS:

To end the yearly declaration of 21st September as a public holiday by Executive Instrument, the Committee recognises the need for the inclusion of this day in the schedule of public holidays. The Committee subscribes to the amendment however noting that it will be more embracing and motivational to organise the day to promote patriotism and Pan-Africanism among Ghanaians.

6.1 The celebration of such a Day could include a proposal to acknowledge all founding leaders of the nation including the Big Six for their stewardship as statesmen as is done on the 6th of March when we commemorate independence day. To exhibit a sense of maturity, patriotism and unity in all spheres of life however, and for the purpose of nation building, it is recommendable that the birthdate of the 1st president is set aside and celebrated as such.

7.0 CONCLUSION

The Founder's Day which this Bill seeks to set aside as a public holiday to commemorate the birthday of Ghana's first president, Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah of blessed memory is an event to be observed on September 21 of each year to honour the founding fathers of our Motherland.

The Committee notes that it is important to celebrate the effort and sacrifice of our founding leaders because "a nation that does not honour its heroes is not worth dying for". By this exemplary act, it hopes all leaders in other areas of endeavor will be likewise celebrated. The Committee, after careful examination of the provisions of the Bill, hereby recommends for its passage into law.

Respectfully submitted



**FRITZ BAFFOUR (HON.)
CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE & INTERIOR**



**GLORIA SARKU KUMAWU
CLERK, COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE & INTERIOR**

July, 2016