



# State of Tennessee

## PUBLIC CHAPTER NO. 720

HOUSE BILL NO. 1828

By Representatives Bulso, McCalmon, Capley, Terry, Brock Martin, Travis, Miller, Bricken, Vital, Hazlewood

Substituted for: Senate Bill No. 1822

By Senators Rose, Bowling, Bailey, Crowe, Niceley, Southerland, White

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 4, Chapter 1, Part 3, relative to official state books.

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Blue Book catalogs Tennessee's official State Songs, State Poems, and State Paintings, yet despite her rich cultural legacy as the birthplace of significant authors, as well as her robust economic history with the publishing industry, Tennessee has not designated any works, fact or fiction, as official state books; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of the books that helped shape Tennessee and of the books that Tennessee's sons and daughters have written that have helped to shape a nation, the publishing industry in Tennessee, and Tennessee's desire to promote the importance of reading to citizens both young and old, the General Assembly finds it appropriate to inaugurate the designation of a list of official state books; and

WHEREAS, on June 1, 1796, Congress approved the admission of Tennessee as the sixteenth state of the union; and

WHEREAS, on September 19, 1796, just three months later, George Washington's farewell address to the people of the United States was published in the *Philadelphia Daily American Advertiser* and then in other papers across the country; and

WHEREAS, recognizing the importance and continued vitality of Washington's farewell address, the United States Senate has, since 1893, read the address aloud each year on February 22, the day of Washington's birth; and

WHEREAS, in his farewell address, George Washington noted, among other things, "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports." Washington continued, "In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens...."; and

WHEREAS, another President, Tennessee's own Andrew Jackson became the seventh President of the United States, winning landslide elections in 1828 and 1832, growing into one of the most important and influential figures in American History; and

WHEREAS, the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, supported by grants from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Tennessee Historical Commission, and the Watson-Brown Foundation, has collected and published in twelve volumes *The Papers of Andrew Jackson*, a project to collect and publish Andrew Jackson's entire extant literary works; and

WHEREAS, in 1835, Alexis de Tocqueville published the first volume of his monumental work, *Democracy in America*. The publication followed de Tocqueville's visit to Nashville and other parts of the United States in 1831; and

WHEREAS, in *Democracy in America*, de Tocqueville explains why George Washington was correct when he described religion and morality as the "indispensable supports" of our political prosperity. Indeed, de Tocqueville wrote that religion "should be considered the first" of America's "political institutions"; and

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WHEREAS, several Tennessee authors have won the Pulitzer Prize, the highest national honor in literary achievement; and

WHEREAS, *All the King's Men* by Robert Penn Warren, who lived in Clarksville, attended Vanderbilt University, and later taught at Vanderbilt University, won the Pulitzer Prize in 1947. The novel tells the story of charismatic populist governor Willie Stark and his political machinations in the Depression-era South; and

WHEREAS, *A Death in the Family* by James Agee, who was born in Knoxville, won the Pulitzer Prize in 1958 posthumously. The autobiographical novel provides a portrait of life in Knoxville, showing how the death of a father in a car crash affects the surviving family members; and

WHEREAS, *Roots* by Alex Haley, who lived in Henning as a child, won the Pulitzer Prize in 1977. It is the most successful book ever penned by a Tennessean and one largely responsible for reviving popular interest in family history; and

WHEREAS, *The Civil War: A Narrative* by Shelby Foote, written when the author lived in Memphis, is a three-volume history of the American Civil War and received national recognition when Foote appeared in Ken Burns' PBS documentary, *The Civil War*, in 1990; and

WHEREAS, *American Lion*, a biography of Andrew Jackson by Jon Meacham, who lived in Chattanooga, won the Pulitzer Prize in 2009; and

WHEREAS, *Coat of Many Colors* by Dolly Parton, a Tennessee native, is a children's book that highlights the author's early childhood in the Smoky Mountains of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, the publishing industry in Tennessee, including publishers such as Thomas Nelson, Zondervan, LifeWay, United Methodist Publishing House, and Gideons International, has made Bible printing its cornerstone. The Aitken Bible by Robert Aiken, being the first English Bible printed in America in 1782, is currently printed by Tennessee publisher The Aiken Bible Historical Foundation and serves to represent Bible printing in Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 4, Chapter 1, Part 3, is amended by adding the following new section:

(a) The following are designated as the official state books:

(1) *Farewell Address to the American People*, George Washington (1796);

(2) *The Papers of Andrew Jackson*, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Tennessee, Knoxville;

(3) *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville (1835 and 1840);

(4) *All the King's Men*, Robert Penn Warren (1947);

(5) *A Death in the Family*, James Agee (1958);

(6) *Roots*, Alex Haley (1977);

(7) *The Civil War: A Narrative*, Shelby Foote (1958-1974);

(8) *American Lion*, Jon Meacham (2009);

(9) *Coat of Many Colors*, Dolly Parton (2016); and

(10) Aitken Bible, Journals of Congress (1782).

(b) The secretary of state shall list the foregoing as the official state books in the Tennessee Blue Book.

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SECTION 2. This act takes effect July 1, 2024, the public welfare requiring it.

HOUSE BILL NO. 1828

PASSED: March 25, 2024



CAMERON SEXTON, SPEAKER  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



RANDY MCNALLY  
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE

APPROVED this 16<sup>th</sup> day of April 2024



BILL LEE, GOVERNOR