

Executive Order 2009-11
Declaring Christmas and Hanukkah Celebration

WHEREAS, Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ, the founder of the Christian religion, and has been celebrated annually for more than two millennia as a significant historical, cultural, and religious event; and

WHEREAS, Hanukkah also known as the Festival of Lights, is an eight-day Jewish holiday commemorating the rededication of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem at the time of the Maccabean Revolt of the 2nd century BC; and

WHEREAS, Christmas and Hanukkah bring joy, love and good will to the hearts of the people of the State of Arizona and hundreds of millions of people across the world; and

WHEREAS, the spirit of good will which has been found each December has been at the heart of our ability to live as one people despite differing faiths and backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, the Constitution does not permit the government to tolerate or engage in hostility toward religion, and the United States Supreme Court has affirmed that the public celebration of religious holidays, and the acknowledgment of religious origins, does not offend the Constitution; and

WHEREAS, state and local officials in Arizona (and elsewhere) in the past have attempted to strip both Christmas and Hanukkah of their meaning, including establishment of policies forbidding state employees from placing religious items of celebration at their desks, re-naming of Christmas trees as “holiday” trees, and renaming of Menorahs as “candlesticks;” and

NOW THEREFORE, I, Janice K. Brewer, Governor of the State of Arizona, by virtue of the authority vested by the Constitution and the laws of the State of Arizona, do hereby order and direct as follows:

1. No executive agency of the State of Arizona shall require that any state employee refrain from personally celebrating Christmas and Hanukkah, including the placement of items traditionally associated with a particular holiday.
2. No executive agency of the State of Arizona shall prohibit any state employee from referring to the Christmas and Hanukkah holidays by their accurate names and wishing others a “Merry Christmas” or a “Happy Hanukkah.”
4. No executive agency of the State of Arizona shall participate in any censorship of the lawful celebration and acknowledgment of Christmas, Hanukkah or any other recognized religious holiday.
5. All executive agencies of the State of Arizona, and any political subdivision thereof, are authorized and directed to cooperate with the implementation of the provisions of this Order.

6. This Order is effective upon signature and shall continue in effect until amended, modified, terminated, or rescinded by the Governor, or terminated by operation of law.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have set my hand officially and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of Arizona, at the Capitol, in the City of Phoenix, on this 16th day of December, 2009.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have to set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the State of Arizona.



Janie K. Brewer
GOVERNOR

DONE at the Capitol in Phoenix on the 16th of December in the year Two Thousand and Nine and of the Independence of the United States of America the Two Hundred and Thirty-Fourth.

ATTEST:

Kyle Blumett

SECRETARY OF STATE