

SENATE BILL 248

P1

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CF HB 84

By: **Senators Jones, Conway, Currie, Gladden, Madaleno, McFadden, Muse, Peters, and Pugh**

Introduced and read first time: January 23, 2009

Assigned to: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **State Government – Commemorative Days – Negro Baseball League**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring the Governor to proclaim annually the second Saturday
4 in May as Negro Baseball League Day; and generally relating to
5 commemorative days.

6 BY adding to

7 Article – State Government

8 Section 13–408

9 Annotated Code of Maryland

10 (2004 Replacement Volume and 2008 Supplement)

11 Preamble

12 WHEREAS, African Americans played baseball throughout the 1800s and
13 began playing on professional teams in the late 1800s; and

14 WHEREAS, African American baseball players were willing to travel almost
15 anywhere and play a nearly unlimited amount of games for little compensation just to
16 get the chance to play top–level baseball; and

17 WHEREAS, Professional Negro baseball leagues afforded the best African
18 American players a chance to play baseball against each other; and

19 WHEREAS, Maryland hosted a number of professional African American
20 teams, including the Snow Hill Nine, the Pocomoke City Giants, the Denton Blue Sox,
21 and the Crisfield Giants of the Colored Baseball League of the Eastern Shore, other
22 teams in Annapolis and on the Eastern Shore, the Mitchellville Tigers, the Rockville
23 ACs, the Yokeley All–Stars, the Washington Black Sox, and Maryland’s two most

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 prominent teams, the Baltimore Black Sox and the Baltimore Elite (pronounced
2 “EE–light”) Giants; and

3 WHEREAS, In the 1940s, the Eastern Shore League, a thriving Class D
4 professional baseball league that existed on Maryland’s Eastern Shore, excluded
5 African American players; and

6 WHEREAS, As a result, the Delmarva Peninsula had a Negro league of its own,
7 and the only remaining baseball stadium on the Shore from that era and one of the
8 few Negro league baseball stadiums remaining in the country still stands in Oakville,
9 Maryland today; and

10 WHEREAS, The Shore also produced the first African American player to be
11 admitted to the Major League Baseball Hall of Fame as well as the first black coach in
12 Major League Baseball, William Julius “Judy” Johnson from Snow Hill; and

13 WHEREAS, The State also produced Leon Day, a flame–throwing right–handed
14 pitcher with a no–windup delivery who grew up in southwest Baltimore, who watched
15 and then played for the Baltimore Black Sox, and later helped lead the Baltimore Elite
16 Giants to the Eastern Colored League pennant before his eventual induction into the
17 Major League Baseball Hall of Fame; and

18 WHEREAS, Another Marylander, Ernest Burke from Havre De Grace, pitched
19 and played outfield for the Baltimore Elite Giants after becoming one of the first
20 African Americans to serve in the Marines during World War II; and

21 WHEREAS, Hubert “Bert” Van Wyke Simmons pitched and played outfield for
22 the Baltimore Elite Giants before living in Woodlawn, taught in Baltimore City, and
23 coached baseball at Dunbar and Northwestern High Schools; and

24 WHEREAS, The Baltimore Black Sox, charter members of the Eastern Colored
25 League in 1923 that showcased a “million dollar infield” in 1929 because the press
26 thought they would have been paid that much if the players had been white, won the
27 American Negro League Championship in 1929 before disbanding in 1934; and

28 WHEREAS, The Baltimore Elite Giants, whose players included Major League
29 Baseball Hall of Fame catcher Roy Campanella, came to Baltimore in 1938 and won
30 the Negro National Title in 1939 and 1949; and

31 WHEREAS, The Negro baseball leagues, thanks in part to their Maryland roots,
32 afforded a place for the best black baseball players to play professionally, and helped
33 baseball grow into the national pastime; and

34 WHEREAS, In 2009, at the 60, 70, and 80 year anniversaries of Baltimore’s
35 Negro League baseball championships, it is appropriate to give due recognition to the
36 Negro baseball leagues, their players, and their fans; now, therefore,

1 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
2 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

3 **Article – State Government**

4 **13-408.**

5 **THE GOVERNOR ANNUALLY SHALL PROCLAIM THE SECOND SATURDAY IN**
6 **MAY AS NEGRO BASEBALL LEAGUE DAY.**

7 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
8 October 1, 2009.