

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2009 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

Senate Bill 248

(Senator Jones, *et al.*)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Health and Government Operations

State Government - Commemorative Days - Negro Baseball League

This emergency bill requires the Governor to annually proclaim the second Saturday in May as Negro Baseball League Day.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Commemorating Negro Baseball League Day would not affect State finances.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Six official commemorative days and two months are recognized in State law as shown in **Exhibit 1**. The Governor also must issue a proclamation each year encouraging citizens and other individuals to observe a moment of silence at 3 p.m. on Memorial Day to unite in remembrance and commemorate the heroic acts and efforts of Marylanders who have served and died in the U.S. armed forces.

Background: Unable to play professional baseball due to racism and Jim Crow laws, African American players began to form their own teams at the turn of the twentieth century. In 1920, an organized league structure evolved, known as the Negro National League. Various rival leagues soon emerged, including the American Negro League, East-West League, and the Eastern Colored League. For more than two decades, negro leagues teams flourished in African American communities. Recruitment of

African American players such as Jackie Robinson by Major League Baseball in the mid-1940s led to the decline of the leagues, the last of which dissolved in the 1960s.

Baltimore was home to two negro leagues teams, the Black Sox and the Elite Giants. The Baltimore Black Sox began as an independent team in 1916, winning the American Negro League pennant in 1929 and the East-West League pennant in 1932. The Baltimore Elite Giants began in 1921 as the Nashville Standard Giants before moving to Baltimore in 1938, where the team won the Negro National League playoff championship in 1939 and the Negro American League championship series in 1949.

Exhibit 1
Official Commemorative Days and Months in Maryland

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| Asian Lunar New Year Day ¹ | January |
| Black History Month | February |
| Women's History Month | March |
| John Hanson's Birthday ² | April 13 |
| Law Day | May 1 |
| Maryland Charter Day | June 20 |
| Poetry Day | October 15 |
| Annapolis Charter Day | December 17 |

¹Day designated as new year on the Asian lunar calendar.

²John Hanson served as the first president of the Continental Congress under the Articles of Confederation from 1781 to 1782.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 84 (Delegate Stukes, *et al.*) - Health and Government Operations.

Information Source(s): Governor's Office, Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 22, 2009
mlm/hlb

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