

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2012 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 42 (Senator Klausmeier, *et al.*)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

State Government - Commemorative Month - German-American Heritage Month

This bill requires the Governor to annually proclaim the month of October as German-American Heritage Month and to urge educational and cultural organizations to observe German-American Heritage Month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2012.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Commemorating German-American Heritage Month does not affect State finances.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Eight official commemorative days and three 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: German-Americans comprise the largest self-reported ancestral group in the State, as well as in the nation. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 14.1% of

Marylanders were of German-American descent. Both the western and northern parts of the State have large German-American populations. German-Americans have been highly influential in American history and society, and a number of German-American celebrations are held annually in major cities across the United States.

German-American Day, observed annually on October 6, was first celebrated in the nineteenth century. The commemoration later died out as a result of anti-German sentiment that prevailed in the first half of the twentieth century but was revived in 1983, when President Ronald Reagan proclaimed October 6 as German-American Day to celebrate three centuries of German-American immigration and culture. In 1987, President Regan signed the commemoration into law.

Exhibit 1
Official Commemorative Days and Months in Maryland

Asian Lunar New Year Day ¹	January/February
Black History Month	February
Women's History Month	March
John Hanson's Birthday ²	April 13
Negro Baseball League Day ³	May
Law Day	May 1
Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Services Workers Day ⁴	June
Maryland Charter Day	June 20
Hispanic Heritage Month ⁵	September/October
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.

³Commemorated on the second Saturday in May.

⁴Commemorated on the first Sunday in June.

⁵Commemorated from September 15 to October 15.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: SB 121 of 2011 received an unfavorable report from the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee. Its cross file, HB 142, received a hearing in the House Health and Government Operations Committee, but no further action was taken.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): U.S. Census Bureau, Department of Legislative Services

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ncs/hlb

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