

HOUSE BILL 549

P1
HB 1341/13 – HGO

4lr1675

By: **Delegates Stukes, Anderson, Arora, Clippinger, Conaway, Harper, Ivey, Mitchell, Oaks, B. Robinson, Rosenberg, Simmons, Summers, and Tarrant**

Introduced and read first time: January 29, 2014
Assigned to: Health and Government Operations

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **General Provisions – Commemorative Days – Juneteenth National Freedom**
3 **Day**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring the Governor annually to proclaim a certain day as
5 Juneteenth National Freedom Day; providing for the effective date of certain
6 provisions of this Act; providing for the termination of certain provisions of this
7 Act; and generally relating to commemorative days.

8 BY adding to

9 Article – State Government
10 Section 13–413
11 Annotated Code of Maryland
12 (2009 Replacement Volume and 2013 Supplement)

13 BY renumbering

14 Article – General Provisions
15 Section 7–409 through 7–412
16 to be Section 7–410 through 7–413
17 Annotated Code of Maryland
18 (As enacted by Chapter ____ (4lr1244) of the Acts of the General Assembly of
19 2014)

20 BY adding

21 Article – General Provisions
22 Section 7–409
23 Annotated Code of Maryland
24 (As enacted by Chapter ____ (4lr1244) of the Acts of the General Assembly of
25 2014)

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 Preamble

2 WHEREAS, More than 140 years old, Juneteenth National Freedom Day is the
3 oldest holiday in the United States commemorating the end of slavery; and

4 WHEREAS, Also known as “Emancipation Day”, “Emancipation Celebration”,
5 “Freedom Day”, “Jun–Jun”, and “Juneteenth”, Juneteenth National Freedom Day
6 commemorates the strong survival instinct of African Americans who were first
7 brought to this country crowded into the bottom of slave ships in a month–long
8 journey across the Atlantic Ocean known as the “Middle Passage”; and

9 WHEREAS, Approximately 11,500,000 African Americans survived the voyage
10 to the New World – and the number who died during passage is likely greater – only to
11 be subjected to whipping, castration, branding, and rape and forced to submit to
12 slavery for more than 200 years after their arrival in the United States; and

13 WHEREAS, Events in the history of the United States that led to the Civil War
14 in 1861 centered around regional differences between the North and South that were
15 based on the economic and social divergence caused by the existence of slavery; and

16 WHEREAS, Abraham Lincoln, who was inaugurated as President of the United
17 States in 1861, believed and stated that the paramount objective of the Civil War was
18 to save the Union, rather than to destroy slavery, but in stating his wish that “all men
19 everywhere could be free”, Lincoln added to the growing anticipation by slaves that
20 their ultimate liberation was at hand; and

21 WHEREAS, In 1862, the first clear signs that the end of slavery was imminent
22 came when laws abolishing slavery in the territories of Oklahoma, Nebraska,
23 Colorado, and New Mexico were passed; and

24 WHEREAS, By September 1862, President Lincoln had warned the 11
25 rebellious Confederate states that if they did not return to the Union by January 1,
26 1863, he would declare their slaves “forever free” via the celebrated Emancipation
27 Proclamation; and

28 WHEREAS, News of this action reached the states at different times, and it was
29 not until June 19, 1865, that the message of freedom reached the slaves in Texas,
30 Oklahoma, Louisiana, Arkansas, and California; and

31 WHEREAS, Spontaneous celebrations erupted throughout the country when
32 African Americans learned of their freedom; and

33 WHEREAS, Juneteenth National Freedom Day, which recalls how slaves hated
34 slavery and celebrated its abolishment with excitement and great joy, serves as a
35 reminder to all Americans of the status and importance of Americans of African
36 descent; 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 **13–413.**

5 **THE GOVERNOR ANNUALLY SHALL PROCLAIM JUNE 19 AS JUNETEENTH**
6 **NATIONAL FREEDOM DAY.**

7 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED BY THE GENERAL
8 ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That Section(s) 7–409 through 7–412, respectively, of
9 Article – General Provisions of the Annotated Code of Maryland be renumbered to be
10 Section(s) 7–410 through 7–413, respectively.

11 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Laws of Maryland
12 read as follows:

13 **Article – General Provisions**

14 **7–409.**

15 **THE GOVERNOR ANNUALLY SHALL PROCLAIM JUNE 19 AS JUNETEENTH**
16 **NATIONAL FREEDOM DAY.**

17 SECTION 4. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That Sections 2 and 3 of this
18 Act shall take effect on the taking effect of Chapter ____ (4lr1244) of the Acts of the
19 General Assembly of 2014. If Sections 2 and 3 of this Act takes effect, Section 1 of this
20 Act shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.

21 SECTION 5. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, subject to the provisions
22 of Section 4 of this Act, this Act shall take effect June 1, 2014.