

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2014 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

Senate Joint Resolution 2 (Senator Manno)  
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

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**Acknowledgment of the Sufferings of Sexually Enslaved Women ("Comfort Women") During World War II**

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This joint resolution commemorates and supports “comfort women” in their fight for proper acknowledgement by the Japanese government of the suffering they endured during their forced sexual slavery in military brothels during World War II. The joint resolution calls on the Japanese government to accept historical responsibility for the sexual enslavement of “comfort women” by the Imperial Japanese military and to educate future generations about these crimes.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None. The joint resolution does not impact State government operations or finances.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Background:** The term “comfort women” is a euphemism used by the Japanese government to describe women forced into sexual slavery by the Imperial Japanese military between 1932 and 1945. While lack of official documentation makes it difficult to know how many “comfort women” there were, historians estimate that the number may total as many as 200,000. The majority of “comfort women” were of Korean or Chinese descent but women from Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Australia, and the Netherlands were also interned in military brothels or

“comfort stations” run directly by the Imperial Japanese military or by private agents working for the military.

In 1993, Japan formally acknowledged and apologized for its military’s involvement in the sexual enslavement of women. However, there have been calls for a more adequate response by the Japanese government from many different groups, including former “comfort women,” academics, nonprofits, and governments across the globe. In 2007, the U.S. House of Representatives, with H. Res. 121 (110th) called on the Japanese government to formally acknowledge, apologize, accept historical responsibility in a clear and unequivocal manner for the sexual enslavement of “comfort women” by the Imperial Japanese military, and to educate current and future generations about the crime.

This joint resolution is modeled after a New Jersey bill, ACR 159, that passed in 2013.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Amnesty International, Asian Women’s Fund, *The Japan Times*, *Time Magazine*, U.S. Congress, New Jersey Legislature, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 25, 2014  
ncs/hlb

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