

Department of Legislative Services  
2015 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 400 (Senator Pugh, *et al.*)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Health and Government Operations

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State Government - Commemorative Months - Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness  
Month

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This bill requires the Governor to annually proclaim June as Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month in recognition of all Marylanders including family caregivers, who have been touched by Alzheimer's disease and other brain-related diseases. The proclamation must urge the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) and the Maryland Department of Aging (MDoA), in conjunction with related public health and advocacy entities, to observe Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month properly with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities, including (1) caregiver summits in honor of The Longest Day team event to provide public input regarding caregiving needs, challenges, and barriers and (2) as appropriate, updates from the Virginia I. Jones Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Council.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** Urging DHMH and MDoA to observe Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month does not affect State finances as they are granted flexibly in how to commemorate the occasion.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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Analysis

**Current Law:** Twelve official commemorative days and six 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:** As noted in the preamble and according to the Alzheimer's Association, Alzheimer's disease, a progressive neurodegenerative brain disorder tragically robs individuals of their memories and leads to progressive mental and physical impairments. Alzheimer's disease is the sixth-leading cause of death in the United States, the ninth-leading cause of death in Maryland and is the only cause of death in the top 10 that has no cure, no treatment, and no way to slow its progression. More than 5 million people in the United States are living with Alzheimer's disease, including 97,000 Marylanders.

The cost of caring for people with Alzheimer's disease in the United States exceeds \$200 billion per year, and those costs are expected to rise dramatically with the increase in the numbers of older people in the coming decades. There are over 286,000 dedicated caregivers in Maryland who provide unpaid care at home valued at more than \$4 billion. Medicare and most private health insurance do not cover the long-term services and support that most people with Alzheimer's disease and dementia need. According to the National Institute on Aging, Alzheimer's disease indirectly costs businesses up to \$37 billion a year in lost productivity for employees who miss work or leave their jobs to provide care for a relative.

Researchers in Maryland and around the world continue their efforts to develop scientific breakthroughs that could one day bring about a world without Alzheimer's disease. There is a need to raise awareness about Alzheimer's disease and to honor all the caregivers who support and care for loved ones with Alzheimer's disease.

Chapter 305 of 2013 established the Virginia I. Jones Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Council to continue the work of the Maryland Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Council. The council's charge includes developing and monitoring the 2012 Maryland State Plan on Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders devised by the commission. The council is staffed by the MDoA and DHMH.

Several nonprofit organizations worldwide commemorate Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month in June. President Obama declared November 2009 as National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month.

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**Exhibit 1**  
**Official Commemorative Days and Months in Maryland**

Asian Lunar New Year Day <sup>1</sup>	January/February
Black History Month	February
Irish-American Heritage Month	March
Women's History Month	March
Crime Victim and Advocate Day	April 3
John Hanson's Birthday <sup>2</sup>	April 13
Maryland Centenarians Day <sup>3</sup>	May
Negro Baseball League Day <sup>4</sup>	May
Law Day	May 1
Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Services Workers Day <sup>5</sup>	June
Juneteenth National Freedom Day	June 19
Maryland Charter Day	June 20
Hispanic Heritage Month <sup>6</sup>	September/October
German-American Heritage Month	October
Poetry Day	October 15
American Indian Heritage Month	November
Maryland Emancipation Day	November 1
Annapolis Charter Day	December 17

<sup>1</sup>Day designated as new year on the Asian lunar calendar.

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

<sup>3</sup>Commemorated on the second Thursday in May.

<sup>4</sup>Commemorated on the second Saturday in May.

<sup>5</sup>Commemorated on the first Sunday in June.

<sup>6</sup>Commemorated from September 15 to October 15.

Source: Department of Legislative Services

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**Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** HB 572 (Delegate Cullison, *et al.*) – Health and Government Operations.

**Information Source(s):** Alzheimer’s Association, White House, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Maryland Department of Aging, Department of Legislative Services

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min/hlb

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