

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2016 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 173 (Delegate Rosenberg, *et al.*)
Health and Government Operations

Commission on the Solemn Remembrance of the Victims of Lynching

This bill establishes the Commission on the Solemn Remembrance of the Victims of Lynching. The commission must study and make recommendations regarding the construction of appropriate markers or memorials in solemn remembrance of the victims of lynching in the State and report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly by December 1, 2016.

The Governor designates the commission's chair, and the Maryland State Archives must provide staff for the commission. A commission member may not receive compensation but is entitled to reimbursement for expenses.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2016, and terminates June 30, 2017.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Any expense reimbursements for commission members and staffing costs for the Maryland State Archives are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources. If the commission determines that additional research is necessary, general fund expenditures may increase minimally in FY 2017 only for contractual staff.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: There are no relevant provisions in statute.

Background: According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, from the 1880s to 1960s, nearly 5,000 men and women were lynched in this country. More than 70% of the lynching victims were African American. The Maryland State Archives, through its Legacy of Slavery Program, has documented acts of lynching in Maryland. This list includes instances in which a person was accused of a crime but was lynched before receiving due process but does not include victims who were lynched under different circumstances.

As noted in the preamble, there are no public memorials or historical markers to remember all of the victims of lynchings that occurred in the State. In 2001, a plaque was dedicated at Brewer Hill Cemetery in Annapolis to honor Henry Davis and other victims of mob justice. On December 21, 1906, Mr. Davis was forcibly removed from an Annapolis jail and paraded through town before being shot numerous times and lynched near College Creek.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Archives, Department of Legislative Services

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