

HOUSE BILL 1462

P1

7lr3143

By: **Delegate Glenn**

Introduced and read first time: February 10, 2017

Assigned to: Health and Government Operations

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **State Designations – Henrietta Lacks Day**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring the Governor annually to proclaim a certain day as Henrietta
4 Lacks Day; and generally relating to Henrietta Lacks Day.

5 BY renumbering

6 Article – General Provisions

7 Section 7–414 through 7–417, respectively

8 to be Section 7–415 through 7–418, respectively

9 Annotated Code of Maryland

10 (2014 Volume and 2016 Supplement)

11 BY adding to

12 Article – General Provisions

13 Section 7–414

14 Annotated Code of Maryland

15 (2014 Volume and 2016 Supplement)

16 Preamble

17 WHEREAS, Henrietta Lacks was a tobacco farmer born on August 1, 1920, in
18 Roanoke, Virginia; and

19 WHEREAS, She died on October 4, 1951, at the age of 31 years from cervical cancer,
20 and was survived by her husband David and five children; and

21 WHEREAS, She was diagnosed with the cancer at Johns Hopkins Hospital in 1951
22 and the cancer took only 8 months to end her life; and

23 WHEREAS, Her tumorous cells were harvested by Johns Hopkins Hospital for
24 research without her knowledge; and

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 WHEREAS, Researchers were astonished that these cells continued to live for a long
2 time outside the body in petri dishes and reproduced rapidly, dramatically increasing their
3 usefulness to researchers; and

4 WHEREAS, Using the first two letters of each of her names, the cells became known
5 as “HeLa” cells, the first immortal human cell line in history; and

6 WHEREAS, The HeLa cells have furthered the understanding of cancer, cloning,
7 gene mapping, in vitro fertilization, HIV/AIDS, and chemotherapy, traveled into space,
8 been exposed to nuclear testing, helped Jonas Salk develop the polio vaccine for human use,
9 and been instrumental in creating the cancer drug tamoxifen; and

10 WHEREAS, The HeLa cells were sold and became responsible for countless
11 treatments and experiments that resulted in billions of dollars in earnings while
12 Henrietta’s family languished in poverty in Turner Station, a small community in Dundalk,
13 Maryland; and

14 WHEREAS, These events have raised legal and moral issues about patient consent
15 and the rights of an individual to the genetic material and tissue of the individual; and

16 WHEREAS, The National Institutes of Health has entered into an agreement with
17 the Lacks family that gives the family some control over access to Henrietta Lacks’s genome
18 data; and

19 WHEREAS, HeLa cells continue to grow and divide to this day, facilitating further
20 significant medical and scientific advances; now, therefore,

21 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
22 That Section(s) 7–414 through 7–417, respectively, of Article – General Provisions of the
23 Annotated Code of Maryland be renumbered to be Section(s) 7–415 through 7–418,
24 respectively.

25 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Laws of Maryland read
26 as follows:

27 **Article – General Provisions**

28 **7–414.**

29 **THE GOVERNOR ANNUALLY SHALL PROCLAIM AUGUST 1 TO BE HENRIETTA**
30 **LACKS DAY.**

31 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
32 1, 2017.