

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2017 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 841 (Delegate Folden, *et al.*)
Health and Government Operations

General Provisions - Commemorative Days - International Gang Awareness Day

This bill requires the Governor to annually proclaim the third Monday in September as International Gang Awareness Day. The proclamation must urge communities and criminal justice professionals throughout the State and the United States to take a stand against gangs and the threat that gangs pose to public safety.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2017.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill is not anticipated to materially affect State operations or finances.

Local Effect: The bill is not anticipated to materially affect local government operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law/Background: Sixteen official commemorative days, six months, and one week 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.

According to Maryland law, a “criminal gang” is defined as a group or association of three or more persons whose members (1) individually or collectively engage in a pattern of criminal gang activity; (2) have as one of their primary objectives or activities the commission of one or more underlying crimes, including acts by juveniles that would be underlying crimes if committed by adults; and (3) have in common an overt or covert organizational or command structure.

[Researchers](#) have found global evidence of international gangs; examples include (1) the Russian “mafia” in Chicago; (2) Nigerian drug smugglers coming through Ronald Reagan International Airport; (3) links between U.S. tongs and Chinese Triads; and (4) MS-13 and 18th Street operating in the metro DC area. According to a [2009 report](#) on combating gangs by the U.S. Government Accountability Office, gangs (including international gangs) are involved in various criminal activities, including the following: selling drugs; people smuggling; assault; drive-by shooting; homicide; identification theft; prostitution operations; robbery; and weapons trafficking.

Exhibit 1
Official Commemorative Days and Months in Maryland

Asian Lunar New Year Day ¹	January/February
Black History Month	February
Irish-American Heritage Month	March
Women’s History Month	March
Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day	March 30
Crime Victim and Advocate Commemorative Day	April 3
John Hanson’s Birthday ²	April 13
National Healthcare Decisions Day	April 16
Maryland Centenarians Day ³	May
Negro Baseball League Day ⁴	May
Law Day U.S.A.	May 1
Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Services Workers Day ⁵	June
Chesapeake Bay Awareness Week ⁶	June
Juneteenth National Freedom Day	June 19
Maryland Charter Day	June 20
Thurgood Marshall Day	July 2
Hispanic Heritage Month ⁷	September/October
German-American Heritage Month	October
South Asian American Heritage Day	October 2
Poetry Day	October 15
American Indian Heritage Month	November
Maryland Emancipation Day	November 1
Annapolis Charter Day	December 17

¹Day designated as new year on the Asian lunar calendar.

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

³Commemorated on the second Thursday in May.

⁴Commemorated on the second Saturday in May.

⁵Commemorated on the first Sunday in June.

⁶Commemorated during the second week in June.

⁷Commemorated from September 15 to October 15.

Source: Department of Legislative Services

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): U.S. Government Accountability Office; Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice; Department of Legislative Services

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md/lgc

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