
By: **Delegates Bronrott, Franchot, Hixson, Pitkin, Barkley, Benson, Burns,
Carlson, Clagett, Crouse, D'Amato, Dobson, Frush, Goldwater, Hecht,
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Paige, Parrott, Riley, Rosso, and Sophocleus**

Introduced and read first time: January 30, 2002
Assigned to: Commerce and Government Matters

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **State Designations - Walking as the State Exercise**

3 FOR the purpose of designating walking as the State exercise.

4 BY adding to

5 Article - State Government

6 Section 13-318

7 Annotated Code of Maryland

8 (1999 Replacement Volume and 2001 Supplement)

9 **Preamble**

10 WHEREAS, Heart disease is the number one cause of death each year in
11 Maryland, and thousands of Maryland citizens suffer from disease and other health
12 problems as a result of a lack of physical activity; and

13 WHEREAS, Mortality rates from coronary artery disease in Maryland rank in
14 the top one-third in the nation with more than 14,000 people dying annually,
15 including one-third before the age of 65; and

16 WHEREAS, Physical inactivity and unhealthy eating are leading risk factors
17 that contribute to at least 300,000 preventable deaths each year in the U.S.; and

18 WHEREAS, In 2000, approximately 26% of Americans and 24% of Marylanders
19 engaged in no leisure time physical activity; and

20 WHEREAS, In 1998, the obesity rate in Maryland was greater than 15 percent;
21 and

22 WHEREAS, In the United States, the number of adults and children who are
23 overweight has risen sharply over the past twenty-five years, and the percentage of
24 adults and children who make trips on foot dropped during that same time period;
25 and

1 WHEREAS, Health care costs related to cardiovascular disease in Maryland are
2 \$2.25 billion yearly, and the nationwide costs attributed to obesity are \$99 billion, \$52
3 billion in direct health costs and \$47 billion in indirect costs annually; and

4 WHEREAS, If all inactive Americans were to participate in physical activity, an
5 estimated \$76.6 billion in direct health costs would be saved; and

6 WHEREAS, More than 10% of children are overweight, and encouraging
7 children to walk more can establish more physically active and healthy lifestyles; and

8 WHEREAS, Suicide is one of the top ten leading causes of death, and physical
9 activity reduces feelings of depression and anxiety; and

10 WHEREAS, The U.S. Surgeon General recommends that all Americans walk at
11 least 30 minutes per day, 5 days a week; and

12 WHEREAS, Walking is one of the best forms of exercise because it helps reduce
13 cholesterol, improve cardiovascular fitness, improve blood pressure, reduce the risk of
14 heart attack, and prevent colon cancer, osteoporosis, and Type 2 diabetes; and

15 WHEREAS, 348,000 Maryland residents have Type 2 diabetes, and walking 30
16 minutes a day cuts the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes by 58 percent; and

17 WHEREAS, Walking is ideally suited for rehabilitation after illness, surgery, or
18 injury by strengthening the heart, lungs, and circulatory system; and

19 WHEREAS, The risk of injury while walking is less than with other forms of
20 physical activity, and injuries while walking are less severe than with many other
21 exercises; and

22 WHEREAS, Walking is a fun activity that friends and family can do together;
23 and

24 WHEREAS, Walking promotes informal interactions between people and
25 strengthens community, and many neighborhoods lack any social contact between
26 neighbors; and

27 WHEREAS, Walking is a natural activity that does not require any specialized
28 equipment or training and is an inexpensive physical activity that most Maryland
29 citizens can do easily, at any time during the day; and

30 WHEREAS, Walking is as close to a universal physical activity as there is and
31 can be easily integrated into the daily routine of most Marylanders; and

32 WHEREAS, Most people in Maryland already walk every day and a person can
33 engage in other activities while walking, such as meeting and greeting neighbors,
34 talking with friends and family, observing nature or the community, and running
35 errands or shopping; and

1 WHEREAS, Environments that encourage walking help to promote tourism and
2 commerce; and

3 WHEREAS, Increased walking is an important facet of livable and sustainable
4 communities; and

5 WHEREAS, Walking is an environmentally friendly method of transportation,
6 which helps to reduce reliance on automobiles while cutting traffic congestion and air
7 pollution; and

8 WHEREAS, Walking as a symbol for Maryland will benefit individual citizens
9 and Maryland as a whole; now, therefore,

10 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
11 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

12 **Article - State Government**

13 13-318.

14 WALKING IS THE STATE EXERCISE.

15 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
16 October 1, 2002.