

**Department of Legislative Services**

Maryland General Assembly

2003 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

House Joint Resolution 6 (Delegate C. Davis)

Rules and Executive Nominations

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**The Return of the Bells of Balangiga**

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This joint resolution supports the return of the two Bells of Balangiga to the Republic of the Philippines. The bells were taken by the U.S. Cavalry during the Philippine-American War and are now located at the Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne, Wyoming. The President of the U. S. is requested to return the two Bells of Balangiga to the Republic of the Philippines with all deliberate speed.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Compliance with this joint resolution would not affect State operations or finances.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** None applicable.

**Background:** The Philippines was ceded to the United States in 1898 following Spain's defeat in the Spanish-American War. A war of resistance against U.S. rule broke out in 1899. The war, known as the Philippine-American War, officially ended on July 4, 1902. The Philippines did not receive its independence from the United States until July 4, 1946.

Both Americans and Filipinos incurred significant casualties during the war. Over 4,200 U.S. soldiers died and over 2,800 were wounded. In addition, over 20,000 Philippine soldiers and at least 200,000 Philippine civilians were killed. During the war, the U.S. Cavalry, after an attack at Balangiga, seized two church bells as a war prize. The bells are currently encased in a monument at the Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Borongan (located in the Philippines) has been urging the U. S. and others for the return of the bells. The diocese states that the bells hold considerable significance in Catholic tradition and are intended to call people to prayer and worship.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** A similar joint resolution was introduced at the 2001 session as HJ 17. The joint resolution received an unfavorable report by the House Commerce and Government Matters Committee.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Department of Legislative Services, U.S. Department of State

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 27, 2003  
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