

Department of Legislative Services

Maryland General Assembly

2006 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Joint Resolution 2 (Delegate Sophocleus, *et al.*)

Rules and Executive Nominations

Citizens of Macedonia, Greece - Hellenic Descendants

This joint resolution recognizes that the ancient Macedonians were Hellenes, and that the inhabitants of Macedonia today are Hellenic descendants and part of the northern province of Greece.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Recognizing the nationality of ancient Macedonians and their descendants would not affect State operations.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: None applicable.

Background: Hellenic is a term for Greek and refers to the history, language, or culture of the ancient Greeks.

During ancient times, Macedonia was a powerful empire with its leader, Alexander the Great, conquering parts of Africa, Asia, and Europe. Located on the Balkan Peninsula of southeastern Europe, the region includes parts of three nations: Bulgaria, Greece, and Macedonia. The name "Macedonia" is currently used by two separate nations, Greece and the Republic of Macedonia. Macedonia is the official name of a region in northern

Greece and the official name of the Republic of Macedonia, one of the republics of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

After declaring its independence from Yugoslavia in 1991, the nation adopted the “Republic of Macedonia” as its constitutional name. The use of the name “Macedonia” by the former Yugoslav republic resulted in a major dispute with the nation of Greece. According to the U.S. State Department, Greece was adamantly opposed to the use of “Macedonia” by the new government, claiming that the term is intrinsically Greek and should not be used by a foreign country. Mediation efforts by the United Nations and the United States resulted in an interim agreement whereby Greece recognized the nation as the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in September 1995. Talks on the use of the name “Macedonia” continues under United Nations auspices. **Exhibit 1** provides some statistical information for both the nations of Greece and Macedonia.

Exhibit 1
Statistical Information on the Macedonian Region

Official Name	Hellenic Republic	Republic of Macedonia ¹
Capital	Athens	Skopje
Population	11.0 million (March 2001 est.)	2.1 million (July 2004 est.)
Languages Spoken	Greek	Macedonian (70%), Albanian (21%)
Land Area	131,957 sq. km. (roughly the size of Alabama)	25,713 square km. (slightly larger than Vermont)
Government Type	Parliamentary Republic	Parliamentary Democracy
Per Capita GDP	\$18,552 (2004 est.)	\$2,570 (2005 est.)
Unemployment Rate	10% (2004 est.)	37.4% (2005 est.)

¹The nation was admitted as an official member of the United Nations on April 8, 1993 and is referred to for all purposes within the United Nations as “The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” pending settlement of the differences that had arisen over its name. After 13 years, the differences have yet to be settled by the international community.

Source: U.S. Department of State

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): United Nations, U.S. State Department, Webster's Dictionary, World Book, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 8, 2006
mam/rhh

Analysis by: Hiram L. Burch Jr.

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510