

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2009 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 131 (Delegate Waldstreicher, *et al.*)
Health and Government Operations

State Government - Commemorative Days - Cesar Chavez Day

This bill requires the Governor to annually proclaim March 31 as Cesar Chávez Day.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Commemorating Cesar Chávez Day does not affect State finances.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Six official commemorative days and two months 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.

Background: Cesar Estrada Chávez (1927-1993) was an American agrarian labor leader, born near Yuma, Arizona. A migrant worker, he worked among Mexicans and Mexican Americans and eventually led the self-help Community Service Organization (CSO) in California. In 1962, he left the CSO to organize wine grape pickers in California and formed the National Farm Workers Association. Using strikes, fasts, picketing, and marches, he was able to obtain contracts from a number of major growers. In 1966, his organization merged with the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations

(AFL-CIO) to form the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee of the AFL-CIO. Chávez launched a boycott in 1968 against table grape growers, mobilizing consumer support throughout the United States. In 1972, the United Farm Workers, with Chávez as president, became a member union of the AFL-CIO. Chávez expanded the organization's efforts to include all California vegetable pickers as well as Florida citrus workers.

Six states have enacted laws that establish commemorative days in honor of Cesar Chávez: Arizona, California, Colorado, Michigan, Rhode Island, and Texas.

Exhibit 1
Official Commemorative Days and Months in Maryland

Asian Lunar New Year Day ¹	January/February
Black History Month	February
Women's History Month	March
John Hanson's Birthday ²	April 13
Law Day	May 1
Maryland Charter Day	June 20
Poetry Day	October 15
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.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Cesar E. Chávez Foundation, Cesar E. Chávez National Holiday, Westlaw, Governor's Office, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 27, 2009
mcp/hlb

Analysis by: Amanda Mock

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