

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2009 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 115 (Delegate Ali)  
Health and Government Operations

---

Punjabi Cultural Awareness Day Act

---

This bill requires the Governor to annually proclaim April 13 as Punjabi Cultural Awareness Day.

---

Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** Commemorating Punjabi Cultural Awareness 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:** The Punjab, a region in northwestern India and eastern Pakistan, has a long history and rich cultural heritage. The region has been invaded and ruled by many different empires and races, including the Aryans, Persians, Greeks, Egyptians, Afghans, and Mongols. In 1947, at the end of a period of British rule, the Punjab was split between Pakistan and India. The region spans approximately 98,730 square miles and has an estimated population of 106.1 million. The people in the region are called

Punjabis and they speak Punjabi and Hindi. The three main religions in the area are Sikhism, Hinduism, and Islam. While the vast majority of the Punjabi live in India and Pakistan, large Punjabi communities exist in nearly 30 other countries, including the United States.

As shown in Exhibit 1, April 13 is currently dedicated to John Hanson, a merchant, patriot, and statesman from Maryland during the American Revolution era. Hanson was elected as a delegate to the Continental Congress in 1779, and served as its first president from 1781 to 1782.

---

**Exhibit 1**  
**Official Commemorative Days and Months in Maryland**

Asian Lunar New Year Day <sup>1</sup>	January/February
Black History Month	February
Women's History Month	March
John Hanson's Birthday <sup>2</sup>	April 13
Law Day	May 1
Maryland Charter Day	June 20
Poetry Day	October 15
Annapolis Charter Day	December 17

<sup>1</sup>Day designated as new year on the Asian lunar calendar.

<sup>2</sup>John 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):** Government of Punjab, Governor's Office, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 28, 2009  
ncs/hlb

---

Analysis by: Amanda Mock

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