

SENATE BILL 630

P1

2lr2868
CF HB 165

By: **Senators Jones–Rodwell, Currie, Gladden, Kelley, McFadden, Muse, and Pugh**

Introduced and read first time: February 3, 2012

Assigned to: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

Senate action: Adopted

Read second time: March 27, 2012

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **State Government – Commemorative Days – Juneteenth National Freedom**
3 **Day**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring the Governor annually to proclaim a certain day as
5 Juneteenth National Freedom Day; and generally relating to commemorative
6 days.

7 BY adding to

8 Article – State Government

9 Section 13–410

10 Annotated Code of Maryland

11 (2009 Replacement Volume and 2011 Supplement)

12 Preamble

13 WHEREAS, More than 140 years old, Juneteenth National Freedom Day is the
14 oldest ~~and only African American~~ holiday ~~observance~~ in the United States
15 commemorating the end of slavery; and

16 WHEREAS, Also known as “Emancipation Day”, “Emancipation Celebration”,
17 “Freedom Day”, “Jun–Jun”, and “Juneteenth”, Juneteenth National Freedom Day
18 commemorates the strong survival instinct of African Americans who were first
19 brought to this country crowded into the bottom of slave ships in a month–long
20 journey across the Atlantic Ocean known as the “Middle Passage”; and

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



1 WHEREAS, Approximately 11,500,000 African Americans survived the voyage
2 to the New World – and the number who died during passage is likely greater – only to
3 be subjected to whipping, castration, branding, and rape and forced to submit to
4 slavery for more than 200 years after their arrival in the United States; and

5 WHEREAS, Events in the history of the United States which led to the Civil
6 War in 1861 centered around regional differences between the North and South that
7 were based on the economic and social divergence caused by the existence of slavery;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, Abraham Lincoln, who was inaugurated as President of the United
10 States in 1861, believed and stated that the paramount objective of the Civil War was
11 to save the Union, rather than to destroy slavery, but in stating his wish that “all men
12 everywhere could be free”, Lincoln added to the growing anticipation by slaves that
13 their ultimate liberation was at hand; and

14 WHEREAS, In 1862, the first clear signs that the end of slavery was imminent
15 came when laws abolishing slavery in the territories of Oklahoma, Nebraska,
16 Colorado, and New Mexico were passed; and

17 WHEREAS, By September 1862, President Lincoln warned the 11 rebellious
18 Confederate states that if they did not return to the Union by January 1, 1863, he
19 would declare their slaves “forever free” via the celebrated Emancipation
20 Proclamation; and

21 WHEREAS, News of this action reached the states at different times, and it was
22 not until June 19, ~~1864~~ 1865, that the message of freedom reached the slaves in Texas,
23 Oklahoma, Louisiana, Arkansas, and California; and

24 WHEREAS, Spontaneous celebrations erupted throughout the country when
25 African Americans learned of their freedom; and

26 WHEREAS, Juneteenth National Freedom Day, which recalls how slaves hated
27 slavery and celebrated its abolishment with excitement and great joy, serves as a
28 reminder to all Americans of the status and importance of Americans of African
29 descent; now, therefore,

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

32 **Article – State Government**

33 **13-410.**

34 **THE GOVERNOR ANNUALLY SHALL PROCLAIM JUNE 19 AS JUNETEENTH**
35 **NATIONAL FREEDOM DAY.**

1 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
2 June 1, 2012.

Approved:

Governor.

President of the Senate.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.