

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2012 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 189 (Delegates Walker and Oaks)  
Health and Government Operations

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State Government - Sickle Cell Anemia Awareness Month

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This bill requires the Governor to annually proclaim the month of September as Sickle Cell Anemia Awareness Month.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2012.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** Commemorating Sickle Cell Anemia Awareness Month does not affect State finances.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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Analysis

**Current Law:** Eight official commemorative days and three 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:** Sickle cell disease is an inherited, red blood cell disorder. Healthy red blood cells are round, and move through small blood vessels to carry oxygen to all parts of the body; in sickle cell disease, red blood cells become hard and sticky and look similar to C-shaped farm tools called a “sickles.” Sickle cells die early, which causes a

constant shortage of red blood cells. Additionally, when traveling through small blood vessels, sickle cells may become stuck and clog blood flow, which can cause pain and other serious problems.

Sickle cell anemia refers to the most common form of sickle cell disease. It is a lifelong disease; people who have the disease are born with it. Sickle cell anemia affects millions of people worldwide and has no widely available cure, although treatments exist for the disease's symptoms and complications. In a small number of cases, bone marrow transplants may offer a cure.

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**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
Negro Baseball League Day <sup>3</sup>	May
Law Day	May 1
Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Services Workers Day <sup>4</sup>	June
Maryland Charter Day	June 20
Hispanic Heritage Month <sup>5</sup>	September/October
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.

<sup>3</sup>Commemorated on the second Saturday in May.

<sup>4</sup>Commemorated on the first Sunday in June.

<sup>5</sup>Commemorated from September 15 to October 15.

## **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** HB 80 of 2011 received a hearing in the House Health and Government Operations Committee, but no further action was taken. SB 964 of 2010 received a hearing in the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, but no further action was taken. Its cross file, HB 333, received an unfavorable report from the House Health and Government Operations Committee. SB 1048 of 2009 received a hearing in the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee but was subsequently withdrawn. Its cross file, HB 1265, received an unfavorable report from the House Health and Government Operations Committee.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 31, 2012  
mc/hlb

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