

Department of Legislative Services
2016 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 215 (Delegate K. Young, *et al.*)
Health and Government Operations

Maryland State Song - Revision

This bill changes the State song lyrics from “Maryland! My Maryland!” composed by James Ryder Randall in 1861, to one verse of that song and one verse of “Maryland, My Maryland” composed by John T. White in 1894.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Modifying the State song lyrics does not materially affect State operations or finances.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The Maryland State Flag was adopted as the State flag in 1904 followed by the adoption of the Black-eyed Susan as the State flower in 1918. Since then, the State has adopted many additional official symbols, as shown in **Exhibit 1**. The Governor is also authorized to designate a citizen as the State’s Poet Laureate.

The official State song consists of the lyrics from “Maryland! My Maryland!” written by James Ryder Randall in 1861 set to the tune of “Lauriger Horatius.”

Exhibit 1
State Symbols of Maryland

<u>Type</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Statutory Authority</u>
Bird	Baltimore Oriole	Ch. 54 of 1947
Boat	Skipjack	Ch. 788 of 1985
Cat	Calico Cat	Ch. 194 of 2001
Crustacean	Blue Crab	Ch. 724 of 1989
Dessert	Smith Island Cake	Chs. 164/165 of 2008
Dinosaur	<i>Astrodon johnstoni</i>	Chs. 403/404 of 1998
Dog	Chesapeake Bay Retriever	Ch. 156 of 1964
Drink	Milk	Ch. 220 of 1998
Exercise	Walking	Chs. 400/401 of 2008
Fish	Rockfish (Striped Bass)	Ch. 513 of 1965
Flower	Black-eyed Susan	Ch. 458 of 1918
Folk Dance	Square Dance	Ch. 707 of 1994
Fossil Shell	<i>Ecphora gardnerae gardnerae</i>	Ch. 688 of 1994
Gem	Patuxent River Stone	Ch. 272 of 2004
Horse	Thoroughbred Horse	Ch. 359 of 2003
Insect	Baltimore Checkerspot Butterfly	Ch. 253 of 1973
Reptile	Diamondback Terrapin	Ch. 476 of 1994
Song	“Maryland, My Maryland”	Ch. 451 of 1939
Sport	Jousting	Ch. 134 of 1962
Team Sport	Lacrosse	Ch. 272 of 2004
Theater	Center Stage	Ch. 1003 of 1978
Theater – Summer	Olney Theatre	Ch. 1003 of 1978
Tree	White Oak	Ch. 731 of 1941

Source: Maryland State Archives

Background: As noted in the preamble, “Maryland! My Maryland!” was composed by James Ryder Randall in 1861 at a time when he was despondent over the death of a friend who was shot while protesting Union troops as they marched through Baltimore. Randall, who was born in Baltimore, wrote the poem while working as an English and Classics professor at Poydras College in Louisiana, according to the Baltimore Literary Heritage Project. The poem, which calls for Maryland to “spurn the Northern Scum” was adopted by Southern troops as a battle hymn during the civil war. It was adopted as the State song in 1939.

According to the Western Maryland Regional Library, John T. White was born in Middletown, Maryland, on June 13, 1856. He was a graduate of Mercersburg Academy, HB 215/ Page 2

Mercersburg, Pennsylvania. Upon graduation, he tutored there in Latin and Greek. He wrote the verses to “Maryland, My Maryland” on January 23, 1894, when he was Principal of Allegany High School in Cumberland, Maryland. At one time, he was President of the Maryland State Teachers Association. He became widely known throughout the State as a poet, his best known poem being “Gettysburg.” On Labor Day 1952, “Maryland, My Maryland” was sung on the dedication of Hoyer Crest, the highest elevation in the State of Maryland, located on Backbone Mountain in Garrett County.

As noted in the preamble, the State Song Advisory Group, headed by the State Archivist, convened in October 2015 and recommended six alternatives to the current State song. The final [report](#) of the advisory group can be found on the Maryland State Archives website. One of the alternatives recommended by the group is to revise the State song by merging select verses from Mr. Randell’s and Mr. White’s poems that meet established State song criteria.

Under the bill, the State song would be the following two verses set to “Lauriger Horatius.”

I

Thou wilt not cower in the dust,
Maryland!
Thy beaming sword shall never rust,
Maryland!
Remember Carroll’s sacred trust,
Remember Howard’s warlike thrust, —
And all thy slumberers with the just,
Maryland! My Maryland!

II

“Sail on, Sail on, O ship of State!”
Maryland, My Maryland
May we, thy children, make thee great.
Maryland, My Maryland.
May gratitude our hearts possess
And boldly we thy claims express,
And bow in loving thankfulness,
Maryland, My Maryland!

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: Similar bills were introduced in the 2009, 2002, and 2001 sessions. HB 1241 of 2009 received an unfavorable report from the Health and Government Operations Committee. SB 19 of 2002 received an unfavorable report from the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee. HB 1057 of 2001 received an unfavorable report from the House Commerce and Governmental Matters Committee.

Cross File: Although designated as a cross file, SB 49 (Senator Young - Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs) is not identical.

Information Source(s): Baltimore Literary Heritage Project, Western Maryland Regional Library, Maryland State Archives, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 26, 2016
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Analysis by: Caroline L. Boice

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