

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2017 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1462 (Delegate Glenn)
Health and Government Operations

State Designations - Henrietta Lacks Day

This bill requires the Governor to annually proclaim August 1 as Henrietta Lacks Day.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2017.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Commemorating Henrietta Lacks Day does not affect State finances.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Sixteen official commemorative days, six months, and one week 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 3:00 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.

Exhibit 1
Official Commemorative Days and Months in Maryland

Asian Lunar New Year Day ¹	January/February
Black History Month	February
Irish-American Heritage Month	March
Women's History Month	March
Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day	March 30
Crime Victim and Advocate Commemorative Day	April 3
John Hanson's Birthday ²	April 13
National Healthcare Decisions Day	April 16
Maryland Centenarians Day ³	May
Negro Baseball League Day ⁴	May
Law Day U.S.A.	May 1
Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Services Workers Day ⁵	June
Chesapeake Bay Awareness Week ⁶	June
Juneteenth National Freedom Day	June 19
Maryland Charter Day	June 20
Thurgood Marshall Day	July 2
Hispanic Heritage Month ⁷	September/October
German-American Heritage Month	October
South Asian American Heritage Day	October 2
Poetry Day	October 15
American Indian Heritage Month	November
Maryland Emancipation Day	November 1
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.

³Commemorated on the second Thursday in May.

⁴Commemorated on the second Saturday in May.

⁵Commemorated on the first Sunday in June.

⁶Commemorated during the second week in June.

⁷Commemorated from September 15 to October 15.

Source: Department of Legislative Services

Background: Henrietta Lacks was an African American woman born on August 1, 1920, who died at age 31 from cervical cancer. She was diagnosed at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, where her tumorous cells were harvested for research purposes without her knowledge. The cells continued to live outside of her body and reproduced rapidly. Using the first two letters of each of her names, the cells became known as HeLa cells, and they were the first immortal human cell line in history. Since their discovery, HeLa cells have been used to research cancer, HIV/AIDS, and numerous other diseases and disorders. Although the harvesting of the cells has raised legal and moral issues about patient consent, the National Institutes of Health recently entered into an agreement with the Lacks family that allows the continued use of HeLa cells for research purposes, subject to some control by the family.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): National Institutes of Health; Department of Legislative Services

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mm/lgc

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