

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2019 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 397 (Senator Elfreth, *et al.*)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

General Provisions - Commemorative Days - Freedom of the Press Day

This bill requires the Governor to annually proclaim June 28 as Freedom of the Press Day.
The bill takes effect June 1, 2019.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Commemorating Freedom of the Press 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.

Background: The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guarantees the freedom of the press, as does Article 40 of the Maryland Declaration of Rights. In 1993, the United Nations General Assembly declared May 3 as World Press Freedom Day. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, the day serves as an occasion to raise awareness of violations of press freedom around the world and to encourage initiatives to strengthen press freedom.

In June 2018, a shooting in the *Capital Gazette* newsroom in Annapolis claimed the lives of five *Capital Gazette* staff members. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, as of March 2019, 1,337 journalists have been killed in the United States since 1992.

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

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 1062 (Delegate Cain, *et al.*) - Health and Government Operations.

Information Source(s): *Capital Gazette*; United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization; Committee to Protect Journalists; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 7, 2019
mag/lgc

Analysis by: Elizabeth J. Allison

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