

SENATE BILL 358

P1
SB 620/20 – EHE

1lr1419

By: **Senator Rosapepe**

Introduced and read first time: January 15, 2021

Assigned to: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **General Provisions – Commemorative Days – Pongal Day**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring the Governor annually to proclaim a certain day as Pongal
4 Day; and generally relating to Pongal Day.

5 BY renumbering

6 Article – General Provisions

7 Section 7–402 through 7–417, respectively

8 to be Section 7–403 through 7–418, respectively

9 Annotated Code of Maryland

10 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2020 Supplement)

11 BY adding to

12 Article – General Provisions

13 Section 7–402

14 Annotated Code of Maryland

15 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2020 Supplement)

16 Preamble

17 WHEREAS, Pongal, meaning boiling over of rice and milk, also known as Thai
18 Pongal, is one of the main festivals celebrating the importance of the harvest in the state
19 of Tamil Nadu in south India, Sri Lanka, and many countries; and

20 WHEREAS, Similar to Thanksgiving Day in the United States, Pongal is a festival
21 of thanksgiving to mother nature, the earth, farm animals, and the sun, in the form of Lord
22 Suryan, for the resources necessary for the bountiful yield of crops; and

23 WHEREAS, Pongal Day, a 4–day festival that typically begins on the first day of the
24 Tamil month Thai, January 14, and ends on January 17, is exemplified by the phrase in
25 the Tamil language “Thai Pirandhaal Vazhi Pirakkum”, meaning “the beginning of the

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 Thai month will open avenues for a better life”; and

2 WHEREAS, On the first day of Pongal, called Bhogi, people welcome prosperity by
3 cleaning and throwing away old and unwanted items to make way for new things, and the
4 day is celebrated with a bonfire; and

5 WHEREAS, The second day of Pongal, called Thai Pongal, is celebrated with colorful
6 kolam decorations, offerings of sugar cane, and cooking the Pongal, a sweet food made of
7 rice; and

8 WHEREAS, The third day of Pongal, called Mattu Pongal, celebrates the importance
9 of farm animals to the harvest, especially cows, and animals are decorated and worshipped
10 and the day is replete with rituals; and

11 WHEREAS, The final day of Pongal, called Kanum Pongal, is spent relaxing and
12 visiting family members and friends, and many families take leisure trips on this day and
13 elders often treat younger members of the family with gifts to show their love; and

14 WHEREAS, The Indian American community makes many important contributions
15 to economic growth in the State, with highly educated professionals and entrepreneurs who
16 work in a variety of fields, open new businesses, and create jobs, all the while continuing
17 to observe and celebrate their rich cultural heritage; and

18 WHEREAS, Pongal Day brings together members of the Indian American
19 community as they celebrate with gatherings, decorations, and special foods; now,
20 therefore,

21 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
22 That Section(s) 7–402 through 7–417, respectively, of Article – General Provisions of the
23 Annotated Code of Maryland be renumbered to be Section(s) 7–403 through 7–418,
24 respectively.

25 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Laws of Maryland read
26 as follows:

27 **Article – General Provisions**

28 **7–402.**

29 **THE GOVERNOR ANNUALLY SHALL PROCLAIM JANUARY 14 AS PONGAL DAY.**

30 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
31 October 1, 2021.