

HOUSE BILL 166

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6lr1223

(PRE-FILED)

By: **Delegate Metzgar**

Requested: October 16, 2025

Introduced and read first time: January 14, 2026

Assigned to: Government, Labor, and Elections

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Public Health – Henrietta Lacks Commission – Establishment**
3 **(Henrietta Lacks Commission of Maryland Act of 2026)**

4 FOR the purpose of establishing the Henrietta Lacks Commission to take certain actions
5 related to the legacy of Henrietta Lacks and the use of HeLa cells; and generally
6 relating to the Henrietta Lacks Commission.

7 BY adding to

8 Article – Health – General

9 Section 24–2801 and 24–2802 to be under the new subtitle “Subtitle 28. Henrietta
10 Lacks Commission”

11 Annotated Code of Maryland

12 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

13 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
14 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

15 **Article – Health – General**

16 **SUBTITLE 28. HENRIETTA LACKS COMMISSION.**

17 **24–2801.**

18 **IN THIS SUBTITLE, “COMMISSION” MEANS THE HENRIETTA LACKS**
19 **COMMISSION.**

20 **24–2802.**

21 **(A) THERE IS A HENRIETTA LACKS COMMISSION.**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



(B) THE COMMISSION CONSISTS OF THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS:

(1) ONE MEMBER OF THE SENATE OF MARYLAND, APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE;

(2) ONE MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES, APPOINTED BY THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE;

(3) THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH, OR THE SECRETARY'S DESIGNEE;

(4) THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE, OR THE SECRETARY'S DESIGNEE;

(5) THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION, OR THE SUPERINTENDENT'S DESIGNEE;

(6) THE CHAIR OF THE STATE ANATOMY BOARD, OR THE CHAIR'S DESIGNEE; AND

(7) THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS, APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR:

(I) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION;

(II) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE LIFE SCIENCES ADVISORY BOARD;

(III) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MARYLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION;

(IV) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MARYLAND BOARD OF TOURISM; AND

(V) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MARYLAND STATE ARCHIVES.

(C) THE GOVERNOR SHALL DESIGNATE THE CHAIR OF THE COMMISSION.

(D) THE TERM OF A MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION IS 2 YEARS.

(E) THE STATE AGENCIES REPRESENTED ON THE COMMISSION JOINTLY SHALL PROVIDE STAFF FOR THE COMMISSION.

1 **(F) A MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION:**

2 **(1) MAY NOT RECEIVE COMPENSATION AS A MEMBER OF THE**
3 **COMMISSION; BUT**

4 **(2) IS ENTITLED TO REIMBURSEMENT FOR EXPENSES UNDER THE**
5 **STANDARD STATE TRAVEL REGULATIONS, AS PROVIDED IN THE STATE BUDGET.**

6 **(G) THE COMMISSION SHALL:**

7 **(1) IN CONSULTATION WITH THE O'NEILL INSTITUTE OF NATIONAL**
8 **AND GLOBAL HEALTH LAW, CONDUCT BIOETHICAL OVERSIGHT OF LIFE SCIENCES**
9 **ACTIVITIES IN THE STATE THAT INVOLVE HUMAN RESEARCH AND BODY, ORGAN,**
10 **AND TISSUE DONATION FOR MEDICAL TRAINING;**

11 **(2) PROMOTE EDUCATION OF THE LIFE OF HENRIETTA LACKS AND**
12 **HELA SCIENCE AS DEVELOPED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH;**

13 **(3) CURATE A REGISTRY OF SIGNIFICANT TRIBUTES TO HENRIETTA**
14 **LACKS;**

15 **(4) WORK WITH APPROPRIATE STATE AGENCIES TO INCLUDE**
16 **TRIBUTES TO HENRIETTA LACKS IN STATE TOURISM CAMPAIGNS;**

17 **(5) PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE TURNER STATION**
18 **COMMUNITY OF DUNDALK; AND**

19 **(6) MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON IMPLEMENTING THE GOALS OF**
20 **THE COMMISSION.**

21 **(H) ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 1 EACH YEAR, BEGINNING IN 2027, THE**
22 **COMMISSION SHALL REPORT ON ITS ACTIVITIES TO THE GOVERNOR AND, IN**
23 **ACCORDANCE WITH § 2-1257 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, THE GENERAL**
24 **ASSEMBLY.**

25 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
26 October 1, 2026.