

**Department of Legislative Services**  
 Maryland General Assembly  
 2026 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**First Reader**

House Bill 170 (Delegates Bouchat and Moon)  
 Government, Labor, and Elections

**Commission to Study African American Civil War Sailors in Maryland**

This bill establishes the Commission to Study African American Civil War Sailors in Maryland. The commission must (1) study the history of African American Civil War sailors who fought for the Union Navy in Maryland, including muster rolls, locations of services, and all distinguished honors and recognitions awarded and (2) make findings and recommendations regarding the funding, design, construction, and location of an appropriate memorial dedicated to the African American Civil War sailors in Maryland. The Maryland State Archives (MSA) must staff the commission. A member of the commission may not receive compensation but is entitled to reimbursement for expenses. By December 1, 2026, the commission must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2026, and terminates June 30, 2027.**

**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** General fund expenditures increase by \$81,900 only in FY 2027 for contractual support to staff the commission and complete the required report. Expense reimbursements for commission members are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources. No effect on revenues.

(in dollars)	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	81,900	0	0	0	0
Net Effect	(\$81,900)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

*Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease*

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

## Analysis

### **Current Law:**

#### *Commission to Study African American Civil War Soldiers in Maryland*

Chapter 434 of 2024 established the Commission to Study African American Civil War *Soldiers* in Maryland. Virtually identical to the requirements proposed under the bill, the commission was required to (1) study the history of African American Civil War soldiers who fought for the Union Army in Maryland, including muster rolls, locations of services, and all distinguished honors and recognitions awarded and (2) make findings and recommendations regarding the funding, design, construction, and location of an appropriate memorial dedicated to the African American Civil War soldiers in Maryland. MSA staffed the commission. By December 1, 2024, the commission was required to report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly; that report, which includes a discussion on African Americans serving in the U.S. Navy, can be read [here](#).

#### *Commission on African American History and Culture*

The Commission on African American History and Culture, among its other powers and duties, must operate the Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum in Annapolis to house and display photographs, objects, oral history tapes, artifacts, and other materials of African American historic and cultural significance. The commission may seek money from the federal government, foundations, and private sources in addition to State financing. It may accept gifts, grants, donations, bequests, or endowments for any of its purposes.

#### *Governor's Commission on Maryland Military Monuments*

Established by executive order and administered by the Maryland Department of Planning, the Governor's Commission on Maryland Military Monuments must undertake an inventory of Maryland military monuments, as specified. The commission must make a determination, based on historical significance, design, financial need, and physical condition, as to which monument must receive assistance with the cost of restoration. The commission must procure sufficient funds for the restoration of the monuments, including contributions secured from grants and fundraising efforts, and must prepare education and tourism materials for public distribution.

**State Expenditures:** MSA advises it is unable to absorb additional duties and has determined that one temporary contractual staff member is needed to staff the commission.

Given the limited timeframe for the commission to produce its report and the intricacy of the commission’s duties, the Department of Legislative Services concurs.

Thus, MSA general fund expenditures increase by \$81,879 in fiscal 2027, which accounts for the bill’s July 1, 2026 effective date. This estimate reflects the cost of hiring one contractual archivist to staff the commission and produce the mandatory report and research, which includes travel costs in order to research relevant historical sites and locations for a memorial. It includes a salary, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, travel and historical site visit costs, and operating expenses.

Contractual Position	1.0
Salary and Fringe Benefits	\$69,599
Travel and Historical Site Visit Costs	3,260
Operating Expenses	<u>9,020</u>
<b>Total FY 2027 State Expenditures</b>	<b>\$81,879</b>

This estimate assumes that the contractual position terminates June 30, 2027, concurrent with the termination of the commission.

This estimate does not include any health insurance costs that could be incurred for specified contractual employees under the State’s implementation of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

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### **Additional Information**

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See HB 77 of 2025.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland State Archives; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 13, 2026  
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Analysis by: Toni Heo

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