

Senate Bill 139 Written Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Arthur Ellis

Position: FAV

ARTHUR ELLIS, CPA
Legislative District 28
Charles County

DEPUTY MAJORITY LEADER

Finance Committee

Senate Chair

Joint Committee on the
Management of Public Funds

Chair, Charles, St. Mary's and Calvert
Counties' Senate Delegation



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Annapolis Office
James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 301
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3616 · 301-858-3616
800-492-7122 Ext. 3616
Arthur.Ellis@senate.state.md.us

District Office
3261 Old Washington Road
Waldorf, Maryland 20602

Sponsor Written Testimony: Favorable

SB 139: State Government - Legal and Employee Holiday - Maryland Emancipation Day

February 27, 2025

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

I, Senator Ellis, am proud to introduce Senate Bill 139 entitled, "State Government - Legal and Employee Holiday - Maryland Emancipation Day." Senate Bill 139 designates November 1 as "Maryland Emancipation Day," a state legal holiday and a state employee holiday to commemorate the abolition of slavery in Maryland.

November 1, Maryland Emancipation Day, commemorates the day in 1864 when Maryland abolished slavery.¹ After the Emancipation Proclamation abolished slavery, border states like Maryland voted a year later to comply with this abolition and notify formerly enslaved Marylanders.² Specifically, soldiers helped to provide the winning votes to change the constitution in Maryland to abolish slavery.³ This decision to abolish slavery was a critical

¹ Jonathan Hunter, *Local Historian Explains the Significance of Emancipation Day in Maryland*, ABC2WMAR Baltimore (Nov. 1, 2024 7:29 PM), https://www.wmar2news.com/local/local-historian-explains-the-significance-of-emancipation-day-in-maryland#google_vignette.

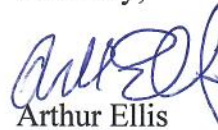
² *Maryland Emancipation Day: Its Impact on Southern Maryland*, Southern Maryland Equity in History Coalition, <https://www.equityinhistory.org/article/maryland-emancipation-day-its-impact-on-southern-maryland/> (last visited Feb. 27, 2025).

³ *Maryland Emancipation Day: Its Impact on Southern Maryland*, Southern Maryland Equity in History Coalition, <https://www.equityinhistory.org/article/maryland-emancipation-day-its-impact-on-southern-maryland/> (last visited Feb. 27, 2025).

turning point in the history of Maryland, and it is critical that residents throughout generations can know and remember this important day. A commemorative day will ensure that the history of this powerful decision by the state of Maryland is not forgotten. November 1 will become an annual holiday that unites the state of Maryland on Maryland's complex history and promising future.

I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 139 to designate November 1 as Maryland Emancipation Day. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Arthur Ellis", written in a cursive style.

Arthur Ellis

2025 - SB 0139 - Maryland Emancipation Day.pdf

Uploaded by: Ken Phelps Jr

Position: FAV



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MARYLAND

The Maryland Episcopal
Public Policy
Network

Testimony in Support of SB 0139

State Government - Legal and Employee Holiday - Maryland Emancipation Day

****FAVORABLE****

TO: Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair; Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair; and the members of the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

FROM: Rev. Ken Phelps, Jr., Director, Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network, Diocese of Maryland

DATE: March 13, 2025

In 2006, the General convention of the Episcopal Church, USA passed Resolution 2006 – A127 which stated in part; “[t]hat in the spirit of inclusion, dioceses also be invited to determine whether their call is to conduct truth and reconciliation processes in regard to other histories and legacies of racial discrimination and oppression that may be applicable in their geographic area, while not diminishing the strong call to focus on the history and legacy of slavery;”

In addition, resolution 2006 – C011, stated in part; the General Convention “urge[d] the Church at every level to call upon Congress and the American people to support legislation initiating study of and dialogue about the history and legacy of slavery in the United States...”

The Episcopal Church has acknowledged its complicity in creating and sustaining the institution of slavery, and by its resolutions has underscored the importance of telling this story as part of the larger story of the African experience in America, and how this truth-telling is vital to our work of reconciliation. The creation of this holiday commemorating the end of slavery in the State of Maryland will be well received as a sign of inclusivity and the intent to continue to pay serious attention to matters of equity and equality.

The Diocese of Maryland requests a favorable report.

2025 SB0139 Testimony Against 2025-03-13.pdf

Uploaded by: Alan Lang

Position: UNF

Testimony Against SB0139

Honorable Senators

Please enter an unfavorable report against SB0139.

I am against

- Establishing November 1 as Maryland Emancipation Day and as a State legal holiday and State employee holiday; and
- repealing the requirement that the Governor declare a certain day as Maryland Emancipation Day.

Why do we need to establish a State holiday to commemorate emancipation from slavery when the federal government essentially did it nationwide by creating the Juneteenth Holiday?

I believe we should leave the current process in place where the Governor proclaims each November 1 to be Maryland Emancipation Day.

If the intent of this bill is to obtain greater recognition of November 1, 1864 as the day slaves were liberated in Maryland when the new state constitution went into effect, perhaps it would be better to have a better public relations campaign than a new state holiday.

So please enter an unfavorable report against SB0139

Alan Lang
45 Marys Mount Road
Harwood, MD 20776
Legislative District 30B
410-336-9745
Alanlang1@verizon.net

March 13, 2025