

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2015 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Joint Resolution 3 (Delegate Branch)
Rules and Executive Nominations

State Government - Vietnamese Freedom and Heritage Flag

This joint resolution urges the Governor to recognize, by proclamation, the Freedom and Heritage flag as the official flag of the Vietnamese American community. In addition, the joint resolution urges the Governor to require that the flag of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, if displayed on the grounds of State buildings or institutions of higher education, be replaced by the Vietnamese Freedom and Heritage flag.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Displaying the Vietnamese Freedom and Heritage flag in lieu of the National flag of Vietnam will not have a material impact on State finances.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law/ Background: As noted in the preamble, in 1975, when the Vietnam War came to a close after the fall of Saigon, many Vietnamese citizens were forced to flee Vietnam in fear of the government of Vietnam's campaign of retribution and persecution. Currently the Socialist Republic of Vietnam operates as a single-party communist system.

The State of Maryland is home to more than 23,000 Vietnamese Americans and other individuals of Vietnamese descent who have made positive contributions to the historical, cultural, educational, and economic prosperity of the State.

The flag of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, which features a yellow star on a red background, represents a source of great distress to many members of the Vietnamese American community and the display of the flag is interpreted as a lack of respect for their historic struggles (**Exhibit 1**). In contrast, the flag of the former Republic of Vietnam, bearing three red stripes on a field of yellow, is now known as the Freedom and Heritage flag and is embraced by the vast majority of Vietnamese Americans (**Exhibit 2**).

Exhibit 1
National Flag – Socialist Republic of Vietnam



Exhibit 2
Vietnamese Freedom and Heritage Flag



State Fiscal Effect: Flags of foreign nations are not typically displayed on the grounds of State buildings. However, some institutions of higher education publically display the flags of the home nations of their student body as a sign of welcome and to display the

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diversity of the student body. It is unknown how many institutions currently display the flag of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam; however, Baltimore City Community College reports that its flag will need to be replaced.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SJ 4 (Senator Pugh) - Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

Information Source(s): Baltimore City Community College, Governor's Office, Department of General Services, Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Department of Legislative Services

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