

**MEMORANDUM**

January 20, 2012

TO: County Council

FROM: Robert H. Drummer, Senior Legislative Attorney 

SUBJECT: **Introduction:** Bill 3-12, Personnel – Special Days of Commemoration - Additions

Bill 3-12, Personnel – Special Days of Commemoration - Additions, sponsored by Councilmembers Leventhal and Elrich, is scheduled to be introduced on January 24, 2012. A public hearing is tentatively scheduled for February 14 at 1:30 p.m.

The religious, ethnic, and cultural heritage of County residents is very diverse. The County benefits economically, intellectually, culturally, and socially from the richness and strength of its diversity and seeks to promote an inclusive community for all residents. The Council enacted Bill 1-06 on March 28, 2006 to designate certain days of commemoration in order to recognize this diversity. The ability of County employees to provide high quality customer service is enhanced when County employees know that certain days have special religious, ethnic, or cultural meaning that will affect the daily activities of a significant number of County residents.

In addition to the days of commemoration designated in law by Bill 1-06, Code §33-4B(b)(2) authorizes the Chief Administrative Officer to designate additional days of commemoration that have “special religious, ethnic, or cultural meaning that may affect the daily activities of a significant portion of the County’s total population.” The CAO has already designated 21 additional days of commemoration under this authority. Bill 3-12 would codify each of these additional days. These additional days and their dates for 2012 are:

**Three Kings Day**

January 6, 2012

Three Kings Days (also called Dia de los Reyes, Epiphany, Feast of Kings, Twelfth Day, Twelfthtide, Day of the Three Wise Men). This major festival of the Christian Church is observed in many parts of the world with gifts, feasting, last lighting of the Christmas lights and burning of Christmas greens. It is the Twelfth and last day of the Feast of the Nativity. It commemorates the visit of the Three Wise Men (Kings of Magi) to Bethlehem. It is one of the oldest Christian feasts, originating in the Eastern Church in the second century, and predates the Western feast of Christmas. It was adopted by the Western Church during the same period in which the Eastern Church accepted Christmas.

**Orthodox Christmas Day**

January 7, 2012

Eastern Orthodox Churches, which use the Julian Calendar to determine feast days, celebrate on January 7 by the Gregorian Calendar.

**Korean American Day**

January 13, 2012

A number of U.S. states have declared January 13 as Korean American Day in order to recognize Korean Americans' impact and contributions.

**Parinirvana - Nirvana day**

February 15, 2012

Mahayana Buddhist festival marking the anniversary of Buddha's death. Pure Land Buddhists call the festival "Nirvana Day". Parinirvana is celebrated by some Buddhists on February 8th. Nirvana Day is the celebration of Buddha's death when he reached total Nirvana, at the age of 80.

**Presidents' Day**

February 20, 2012

Washington's Birthday is a United States federal holiday celebrated on the third Monday of February in honor of George Washington, the first President of the United States. Although President Lincoln's birthday, February 12, was never a federal holiday, approximately a dozen state governments including Maryland, have officially renamed their Washington's Birthday observances as Presidents' Day.

**Magha Puja**

March 8, 2012

Fourfold Assembly or Sangha Day. Marks the day Buddha addressed a meeting of 1250 arahants.

**Norouz**

March 20, 2012

"New Day" (originally "New Light") is the traditional celebration of the ancient Achaemenid Iranian New Year. Norouz is also widely referred to as the Persian New Year. Norouz is celebrated and observed by Iranian peoples and has spread in many other parts of the world, including parts of Central Asia, South Asia, Northwestern China, the Crimea and some groups in the Balkans. It is marked by family visits and the exchange of gifts, as well as special feasts. It is also commemorated by setting tables with foods and special items beginning with the letter S; this is known as the Haft Sin. The 13th day of the New Year festival is called "Sizdah Bedar" and is spent out of doors at picnics and parks. The UN's General Assembly in 2010 recognized the International Day of Norouz, describing it a spring festival of Persian origin which has been celebrated for over 3,000 years.

**Theravada New Year**

April 6 - 9, 2012

New Year festival for Theravada Buddhists, celebrated for three days from the first full moon day in April.

**Festival of Ridvan**

April 21, 2012

Festival of Ridvan - Meaning ("paradise") is a Baha'i celebration commemorating the 12-day period in 1863 that Baha'u'llah (Baha'i founder) spent in the Garden of Ridvan, just outside Bagdad. During this period, Baha'u'llah began his prophethood and became God's messenger for this age. Baha'u'llah was in the Garden of Ridvan from April 21 to May 2, 1863, and this period is considered the most holy festival of the Baha'i faith and is called "Most Great Festival." The Festival of Ridvan is observed according to the Baha'i calendar and begins on April 21 and continues through May 2 each year.

**Wesak or Buddha day**

May 6, 2012

The most important of the Buddhist festivals. It celebrates the Buddha's birthday, and, for some Buddhists, also marks his enlightenment and death.

**Ascension Thursday (Orthodox)**

May 17, 2012

Religious observance by many Christians, affirming the ascension of Jesus, celebrated on the Thursday in the sixth week following Easter Sunday.

**Memorial Day**

May 28, 2012

Memorial Day is a United States federal holiday observed on the last Monday of May. Memorial Day is a day of remembering the men and women who died while serving in the United States Armed Forces.

**Dharma Day**

July 3, 2012

The anniversary of the start of Buddha's teaching - his first sermon, "The Wheel of Truth", after his enlightenment.

**Independence Day**

July 4, 2012

Independence Day, commonly known as the Fourth of July, is a federal holiday in the United States commemorating the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, declaring independence from Great Britain.

**Ramadan: The Islamic Month of Fasting**

July 20, 2012

Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, is holy because it was during this month that the Holy Quran (Koran) was revealed. Adults fast from dawn until sunset to achieve spiritual and physical purification and self-discipline, abstaining from food, drink and intimate relations. It is a time for feeling a common bond with the poor and needy, and is a time of piety and prayer. It begins on the Islamic lunar calendar date Ramadan 1, 1429. Begins at sunset the preceding day.

**Labor Day**

September 3, 2012

Labor Day is a United States federal holiday observed on the first Monday in September that celebrates the economic and social contributions of workers.

**Veterans' Day**

November 11, 2012

Veterans Day, formerly Armistice Day, is a United States federal holiday observed on November 11 honoring armed service veterans.

**Thanksgiving Day**

November 22, 2012

Thanksgiving Day is a holiday celebrated in the United States on the fourth Thursday in November. On Thanksgiving Day, people give thanks for what they have and for the good things that happened during the year. The first Thanksgiving in New England took place in Plymouth, Massachusetts, in 1621. In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln declared the last Thursday in November as a national day of thanksgiving. Presidents made a similar declaration each year afterward. Congress established Thanksgiving Day as a legal national holiday beginning in 1941.

**American Indian Heritage Day**

November 23, 2012

On November 13, 2007, the United States House of Representatives unanimously passed legislation introduced by Representative Joe Baca that encourages the designation of the Friday after Thanksgiving Day as Native American Heritage Day to pay tribute to Native Americans for their many contributions to the United States. It is observed as a state holiday in Maryland. Source: [http://mlis.state.md.us/2008rs/chapters\\_noln/Ch\\_486\\_hb0083T.pdf](http://mlis.state.md.us/2008rs/chapters_noln/Ch_486_hb0083T.pdf)

**Hanukkah (Chanukah)**

December 8 - 16, 2012

Hanukkah (Chanukah) is celebrated by Jewish people around the world to commemorate their victory in the Maccabean War of 162 B.C.E. After the war, the Temple was cleansed and rededicated and the Menorah (perpetual lamp) was relit. Hanukkah means "dedication" in Hebrew. The celebration of Hanukkah is also known as the "Feast of Lights" because one of the stories told is that the oil for the lamps was sufficient only for one day but burned miraculously for eight days. Today, Jewish families celebrate Hanukkah by lighting a special Menorah with eight candles plus a ninth shamash candle (server used to light the others). The dates of the Holiday usually fall in November or December, starting on the 25th day of Kislev in the Hebrew calendar each year. Begins at sundown December 8, 2012.

**Bodhi Day**

December 8, 2012

On Bodhi day some Buddhists celebrate Gautama's attainment of enlightenment under the Bodhi tree at Bodhgaya, India.

This packet contains:

Bill 3-12

Legislative Request Report

Circle #

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Bill No. 3-12  
Concerning: Personnel – Special Days  
of Commemoration – Additions  
Revised: January 18, 2012 Draft No. 1  
Introduced: January 24, 2012  
Expires: July 24, 2013  
Enacted: \_\_\_\_\_  
Executive: \_\_\_\_\_  
Effective: \_\_\_\_\_  
Sunset Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ch. \_\_\_\_\_, Laws of Mont. Co. \_\_\_\_\_

## COUNTY COUNCIL FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

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By: Councilmembers Leventhal and Elrich

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**AN ACT** to:

- (1) designate certain additional days of commemoration; and
- (2) generally amend the law relating to County employees and the religious, ethnic, and cultural heritage of County residents.

By amending

Montgomery County Code  
Chapter 33, Personnel and Human Resources  
Section 33-4B, Days of Commemoration

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>Boldface</b>              | <i>Heading or defined term.</i>                            |
| <u>Underlining</u>           | <i>Added to existing law by original bill.</i>             |
| [Single boldface brackets]   | <i>Deleted from existing law by original bill.</i>         |
| <u>Double underlining</u>    | <i>Added by amendment.</i>                                 |
| [[Double boldface brackets]] | <i>Deleted from existing law or the bill by amendment.</i> |
| * * *                        | <i>Existing law unaffected by bill.</i>                    |

*The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following Act:*

**Sec. 1. Section 33-4B is amended as follows:**

**Sec. 33-4B. Days of commemoration.**

(a) Legislative findings.

- (1) The religious, ethnic, and cultural heritage of County residents is very diverse.
- (2) The County benefits economically, intellectually, culturally, and socially from the richness and strength of its diversity and seeks to promote an inclusive community for all residents.
- (3) The County's respect for the diversity of its own workforce is reflected in the County's rules governing leave and alternate work schedules for religious observance.
- (4) The ability of County employees to meet the needs of County residents and provide high quality customer service is enhanced when County employees know that certain days have special religious, ethnic, or cultural meaning that will affect the daily activities of a significant number of County residents.

(b) Days of commemoration.

- (1) Each of the following calendar days is designated a day of commemoration:
  - (A) Eid Ul-Adha;
  - (B) Asian Lunar New Year;
  - (C) Martin Luther King Day;
  - (D) Ash Wednesday;
  - (E) Purim;
  - (F) Passover;
  - (G) Holy Thursday;
  - (H) Good Friday;

- 28 (I) Easter;
- 29 (J) Orthodox Holy Thursday;
- 30 (K) Orthodox Good Friday;
- 31 (L) Orthodox Easter;
- 32 (M) Ascension Thursday (Western);
- 33 (N) Shavuot;
- 34 (O) Feast of the Assumption;
- 35 (P) Juneteenth;
- 36 (Q) Rosh Hashanah;
- 37 (R) Yom Kippur;
- 38 (S) Succoth;
- 39 (T) [Shmini] Shemini Atzeret;
- 40 (U) Simchas Torah;
- 41 (V) Eid Ul-Fitr;
- 42 (W) Diwali;
- 43 (X) Feast of All Saints;
- 44 (Y) Feast of the Immaculate Conception;
- 45 (Z) Christmas; [and]
- 46 (AA) Kwanza;
- 47 (BB) Korean American Day;
- 48 (CC) Three Kings Day;
- 49 (DD) Orthodox Christmas Day;
- 50 (EE) Parinirvana – Nirvana Day;
- 51 (FF) President’s Day;
- 52 (GG) Magha Puja;
- 53 (HH) Norouz;
- 54 (II) Theravada New Year;



## LEGISLATIVE REQUEST REPORT

Bill 3-12

*Personnel – Special Days of Commemoration - Additions*

**DESCRIPTION:** This bill would add each day already designated by the CAO as an additional day of commemoration to the list of calendar days that have special religious, ethnic, or cultural meaning.

**PROBLEM:** The CAO has designated 21 days of commemoration that are not listed in the law. This Bill would codify each of these additional days as a day of commemoration.

**GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:** The ability of County employees to provide high quality customer service is enhanced when County employees know that certain days have special religious, ethnic, or cultural meaning that will affect the daily activities of a significant number of County residents. The addition of these days will enhance the awareness of County employees and residents.

**COORDINATION:** Chief Administrative Officer, Human Resources

**FISCAL IMPACT:** To be requested.

**ECONOMIC IMPACT:** To be requested.

**EVALUATION:** To be requested.

**EXPERIENCE ELSEWHERE:** To be researched.

**SOURCE OF INFORMATION:** Robert H. Drummer, Senior Legislative Attorney, 240-777-7895

**APPLICATION WITHIN MUNICIPALITIES:** To be researched.

**PENALTIES:** Not applicable.

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