



Senate Fiscal Agency
P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7536



Telephone: (517) 373-5383
Fax: (517) 373-1986

House Bill 4519 (as passed by the House)
Sponsor: Representative Helena Scott
House Committee: Government Operations
Senate Committee: Regulatory Affairs

Date Completed: 5-22-24

CONTENT

The bill would declare May 2 of each year as "Negro Leagues Day".

BACKGROUND

In 1867 the National Association of Amateur Baseball Players began rejecting African American membership, and in 1876, owners of the National League adopted a "color line", which was a "gentlemen's agreement" barring Black Americans from professional baseball until 1947. Additionally in 1887, the few Black players remaining in the International Leagues were barred from signing new contracts in that circuit. Despite exclusion and segregation, Black players persisted in high-level competition. In 1920, Rube Foster founded the Negro National League with eight teams: Chicago American Giants; Chicago Giants; Cuban Stars; Dayton Marcos; Detroit Stars; Kansas City Monarchs; Indianapolis ABCs; and the Saint Louis Giants. Following the League's success, the Eastern Colored League was formed in 1923 and the Negro American League formed in 1937. These leagues convened to compete in East-West All Star Games and World Series Championships.

By 1942, there was a push to integrate major league baseball and athletic stars Jackie Robinson and Nate Moreland were granted a cursory workout with the Chicago White Sox. In 1945 sportswriters provided an opportunity for the Negro Leagues' players to try out for the Brookland Dodgers and Boston Red Sox. Baseball slowly became integrated and following the successes of players like Jackie Robinson, Larry Doby, and Roy Campanella, among others, the Negro Leagues' fan base began to diminish. In December 2020, the Major League Baseball Commission officially declared that the seven Negro Leagues would be recognized as official major leagues and players of those leagues would have their records and statistics recognized in baseball's record books.¹

Legislative Analyst: Nathan Leaman

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

Fiscal Analyst: Joe Carrasco, Jr.

¹ "Negro League Baseball," <https://www.history.com/topics/sports/negro-league-baseball>. Retrieved on 05-22-24.

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.