

# SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 6

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By: **Senator Nathan–Pulliam**

Introduced and read first time: February 3, 2017

Assigned to: Finance

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## SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A Senate Joint Resolution concerning

2 **Dedication – Henrietta Lacks Way**

3 FOR the purpose of urging the governing body of Baltimore County to dedicate a certain  
4 portion of Dundalk Avenue in Baltimore County as Henrietta Lacks Way; and  
5 generally relating to the dedication of Henrietta Lacks Way.

6 WHEREAS, Henrietta Lacks was a tobacco farmer born on August 1, 1920, in  
7 Roanoke, Virginia; and

8 WHEREAS, She died on October 4, 1951, at the age of 31 years, from cervical cancer,  
9 and was survived by her husband David and five children; and

10 WHEREAS, She was diagnosed with the cancer at Johns Hopkins Hospital in 1951  
11 and the cancer took only 8 months to end her life; and

12 WHEREAS, Her tumorous cells were harvested for research without her knowledge  
13 at Johns Hopkins Hospital; and

14 WHEREAS, Researchers were astonished that these cells continued to live for a long  
15 time outside her body in petri dishes and reproduced rapidly, dramatically increasing their  
16 usefulness to researchers; and

17 WHEREAS, Using the first two letters of each of her names, the cells became known  
18 as “HeLa” cells, the first immortal human cell line in history; and

19 WHEREAS, HeLa cells have furthered the understanding of cancer, cloning, gene  
20 mapping, in vitro fertilization, HIV/AIDS, and chemotherapy, traveled into space, been  
21 exposed to nuclear testing, helped Jonas Salk develop the polio vaccine for human use, and  
22 been instrumental in creating the cancer drug tamoxifen; and

23 WHEREAS, The HeLa cells were sold and became responsible for countless  
24 treatments and experiments that resulted in billions of dollars in earnings while



1 Henrietta's family languished in poverty in Turner Station, a small community in Dundalk,  
2 Maryland; and

3 WHEREAS, These events have raised legal and moral issues about patient consent  
4 and the rights of an individual to the genetic material and tissue of the individual; and

5 WHEREAS, The National Institutes of Health has entered into an agreement with  
6 the Lacks family that gives the family some control over access to Henrietta Lacks's genome  
7 data; and

8 WHEREAS, HeLa cells continue to grow and divide to this day, facilitating further  
9 significant medical and scientific advances; and

10 WHEREAS, The General Assembly of Maryland desires that Henrietta Lacks be  
11 given a suitable memorial in her honor in appreciation of her special contribution to these  
12 advances; and

13 WHEREAS, The General Assembly of Maryland feels that dedicating a portion of  
14 Dundalk Avenue in Baltimore County would be a suitable memorial for Henrietta Lacks;  
15 now, therefore, be it

16 RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the General  
17 Assembly of Maryland urges the governing body of Baltimore County to dedicate the  
18 portion of Dundalk Avenue in Baltimore County between the 3400 block and 3800 block,  
19 inclusive, as Henrietta Lacks Way; and be it further

20 RESOLVED, That copies of this Joint Resolution be forwarded by the Department  
21 of Legislative Services to the Honorable Kevin B. Kamenetz, County Executive of Baltimore  
22 County, 400 Washington Avenue, M1, Towson, Maryland, 21204 and the Honorable Tom  
23 Quirk, Chairman of the Baltimore County Council, 400 Washington Avenue, #205, Towson,  
24 Maryland, 21204, with a request that it be circulated among the members of the County  
25 Council of Baltimore County.