

BILL: Senate Bill 76
TITLE: Legal Holiday - Maryland Emancipation Day - Establishment
DATE: February 27, 2020
POSITION: Information Only
COMMITTEE: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
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The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all of the State's local boards of education, provides the following input on Senate Bill 76, which proposes to establish November 1 as Emancipation Day, and requiring that all public schools be closed in recognition.

First, MABE must emphasize the full support of local boards of education for appropriate recognition of Emancipation Day. Under this bill, Emancipation Day would be recognized on November 1 because, on that date in 1864 Maryland adopted a new constitution that abolished slavery. Clearly, there is enormous value in imparting to students the significance of the fact that Maryland was the first State to voluntarily free persons from slavery by popular vote.

MABE also believes that there is enormous value in allowing schools to remain open for holidays signifying historic events. Students are more likely to benefit from age appropriate school programs and instruction related to the history and meaning of Emancipation Day than if schools are required to be closed. In this context, MABE also notes the very close proximity of November 1 to the mandatory school holiday for general election days.

Again, MABE looks forward to contributing to the legislature's deliberations and action to ensure the meaningful recognition in our public schools and throughout the State of Maryland's Emancipation Day.