

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2000 Session

FISCAL NOTE

Senate Bill 789 (Senator Bromwell)

Economic and Environmental Affairs

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Public Institutions of Higher Education - Academic Year

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This bill prohibits a public institution of higher education from beginning its regular academic year before Labor Day.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** The University System of Maryland (USM) would lose \$4 to \$5 million in tuition and room and board revenue in years that winter terms need to be canceled as a result of the bill.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** Potential meaningful.

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Analysis

**Current Law:** None applicable.

**Background:** Every year, businesses in resort areas such as Ocean City lose workers during the month of August because many workers are college students who must return to school before Labor Day. This can hurt business during Labor Day weekend, one of the busiest weekends of the summer season.

**State Fiscal Effect:** The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) advises that for each credit hour to be received by a student for a college class, a minimum of 15 hours of classroom instructional time is required. Therefore, each three-credit-hour class requires 45 hours of classroom time, which generally translates to a 15-week semester.

If public higher educational institutions were to begin the fall semester after Labor Day, the institutions would be required to hold final examinations for the fall semester after the winter break in some years. (This would be especially true if time is allowed for students to leave a resort area after Labor Day, return home, and then move back to college and get organized before the start of classes.) Postponing final examinations until January would require the cancellation of winter terms, which are held by all USM institutions except University of Maryland University College. USM advises that cancellation of winter terms would result in a loss of \$4 to \$5 million in tuition and room and board revenue annually.

Additional printing and related costs could also be incurred by institutions to the extent that schedules have already been printed for the fall 2000 semester.

**Small Business Effect:** Small businesses located in resorts would be better able to retain college student workers until after Labor Day weekend. On the other hand, small businesses could be deprived of college student workers during the winter break period to the extent that exams are postponed until January.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland Higher Education Commission, University System of Maryland, St. Mary's College of Maryland, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 6, 2000  
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