

SENATE BILL 558

F1

EMERGENCY BILL

0lr0170
CF HB 743

By: **The President (By Request – Administration)**

Introduced and read first time: January 30, 2020

Assigned to: Rules

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Universal School Start Act of 2020**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring, beginning in a certain school year, a county board of
4 education to set the start date of the school year for schools in the county not earlier
5 than the first Tuesday after Labor Day; authorizing a county board to grant a school
6 a certain waiver from a certain requirement for good cause as established by the
7 State Board of Education in regulations; requiring the State Board to adopt certain
8 regulations; making this Act an emergency measure; and generally relating to
9 county boards of education and the start date of the school year.

10 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
11 Article – Education
12 Section 7–103(g)
13 Annotated Code of Maryland
14 (2018 Replacement Volume and 2019 Supplement)

15 Preamble

16 WHEREAS, The Labor Day holiday weekend is an exclusively American institution
17 that has served, both symbolically and practically, as our nation’s traditional end of
18 summer; and

19 WHEREAS, Generations of American workers and families have celebrated this rite
20 of seasonal passage, and the days that precede it, with vacations, day trips, or other
21 preferred opportunities to relax and enjoy time with family and friends; and

22 WHEREAS, The policy of constructing the public elementary and secondary school
23 calendars so that classes begin before the Labor Day holiday has imperiled this venerable
24 tradition; and

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 WHEREAS, This policy has placed a significant competitive burden on Maryland's
2 economy and many of its leading sectors, from agriculture to tourism and hospitality; and

3 WHEREAS, This policy imposes an unacceptable public health and safety risk on
4 the students, teachers, and education employees who are required to report, in the second
5 hottest month of the calendar year, to schools that lack air conditioning; and

6 WHEREAS, The State has a particularly compelling interest in safeguarding the
7 physical and psychological well-being of minors; and

8 WHEREAS, The Maryland General Assembly convened the Task Force to Study a
9 Post-Labor Day Start Date for Maryland Public Schools in 2013 to conduct a thorough
10 examination of the academic, administrative, and economic implications associated with a
11 post-Labor Day start to the school year; and

12 WHEREAS, The Task Force, led by the Maryland State Department of Education,
13 included teachers, administrators, and business and civic leaders, and (1) recognized the
14 substantial economic benefits of a post-Labor Day start, (2) found neither adverse academic
15 consequences nor intractable administrative barriers to the adoption of such a policy, and
16 (3) voted overwhelmingly to endorse this reform to Maryland's public school calendars by
17 moving the school start date to after Labor Day; and

18 WHEREAS, Starting school after Labor Day will provide public health benefits by
19 reducing the local ozone generation numbers due to fewer buses operating on the roadways
20 during the heart of the ozone season; now, therefore,

21 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
22 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

23 **Article – Education**

24 7–103.

25 (g) (1) [Notwithstanding any other law and subject] **SUBJECT** only to this
26 section **AND EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION**, each
27 county board annually shall set the start and end dates of the school year for schools in the
28 county.

29 (2) (I) **BEGINNING WITH THE 2020–2021 SCHOOL YEAR, A COUNTY**
30 **BOARD SHALL SET THE START DATE OF THE SCHOOL YEAR FOR SCHOOLS IN THE**
31 **COUNTY NOT EARLIER THAN THE FIRST TUESDAY AFTER LABOR DAY.**

32 (II) **THE COUNTY BOARD MAY GRANT A WAIVER OF THE**
33 **REQUIREMENT IN SUBPARAGRAPH (I) OF THIS PARAGRAPH TO A SCHOOL FOR 1**
34 **YEAR FOR GOOD CAUSE AS ESTABLISHED IN REGULATIONS BY THE STATE BOARD.**

1 **(III) THE STATE BOARD SHALL ADOPT REGULATIONS TO**
2 **IMPLEMENT THIS PARAGRAPH.**

3 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act is an emergency
4 measure, is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public health or safety, has
5 been passed by a ye and nay vote supported by three-fifths of all the members elected to
6 each of the two Houses of the General Assembly, and shall take effect from the date it is
7 enacted.