

BILL: House Bill 743
TITLE: Universal School Start Act of 2020
POSITION: OPPOSE
DATE: February 21, 2020
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means Committee
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) strongly opposes this legislation and reiterates our support and appreciation to the General Assembly for the Community Control of School Calendars Act passed in 2019.

The law enacted in 2019 alleviates the barriers to local decision making on school calendars, by authorizing each local board of education to establish the annual school calendar including the first day of school and last day of school. In this way, this bill allows each local board to determine how to craft the entire local school calendar including holidays, professional development days, parent conferences, election days and other factors.

MABE successfully opposed legislation for several years which would have prohibited public schools from opening before the day after Labor Day. Then in 2016 Governor Hogan issued Executive Orders mandating a post-Labor Day start and end-date no later than June 15 for all of Maryland's public schools beginning in 2017. MABE objected to the Executive Orders, and sought legislation to repeal them, in order to preserve and protect the rights of local communities and their respective boards of education to adopt school calendars.

For these reasons, MABE urges an unfavorable report on House Bill 743.