



**TESTIMONY OFFERED ON BEHALF OF
THE OCEAN CITY HOTEL-MOTEL-RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION
IN SUPPORT OF HB 743 UNIVERSAL SCHOOL START**

On behalf of more than 400 hospitality industry members whose livelihoods depend on Ocean City's tourism economy, we respectfully request your support of SB558. Summer jobs allow thousands of Maryland high school students the opportunity to learn time management and financial responsibility. This workforce is vital to ensuring visitor satisfaction in the many tourism destinations throughout Maryland. During these economic times, we need to be doing all that we can to support local workforce economies and help foster their growth. Allowing one additional week of vacation will bring millions more to the state and local tax coffers.

The State Task Force which included public school teachers, parents of students, State Department of Education and members of the General Assembly, gave full consideration to the positions of supporters and opponents of this concept. For almost nine months, Task Force members met, studied and deliberated every position presented. After considering all the facts, a super majority of Task Force members approved a recommendation supporting a post-Labor Day school start for all public schools in Maryland. They concluded that with minor adjustments to current calendars, such as reducing the number of in-service days, schools could start after Labor Day, absorb non-scheduled closings due to weather and still wrap up for the summer well before the end of June.

Starting schools not earlier than the first Tuesday after Labor Day would be a win for Maryland's families and for Maryland's economy. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Susan L. Jones
Executive Director