



SB840 GENERAL PROVISIONS – STANDARD TIME – YEAR–ROUND DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

March 11, 2021

EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

OPPOSE

Jeanette Ortiz, Esq., Legislative & Policy Counsel (410.703.5352)

Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) opposes **SB840 General Provisions – Standard Time – Year–Round Daylight Saving Time**. This bill requires the standard time in the State to be Eastern Daylight Time year-round, which would establish year-round daylight saving time in Maryland. This change is contingent on the appropriate federal law being amended to allow a state, individually, to observe a year-round standard time that is consistent with Eastern Daylight Time. The Secretary of State must monitor any related changes to federal law and report notice of any change to the Department of Legislative Services (DLS). If DLS receives notice of the change by December 31, 2026, this change takes effect the second Sunday in March or the first Sunday in November after the change takes effect, whichever occurs first. If DLS does not receive notice of any change by December 31, 2026, the bill terminates.

The Board of Education of Anne Arundel County supports school start times that are consistent with student health, safety, and student developmental needs. Many school systems are working to address this issue, which has gained attention after decades of scientific research. Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) recognizes the importance of developing a healthy school environment which promotes student health, well-being, and the ability to learn. Accordingly, AACPS is looking at opportunities to align school start times with recommendations by national health and educational organizations for student well-being and academic success. Those organizations include the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Sleep Medicine, American Medical Association, American Psychological Association, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Association of School Nurses, Society of Pediatric Nurses, National Education Association, and National Parent Teacher Association.

Existing school start time recommendations are based on current practices of alternating between standard time and Eastern Daylight Time. If Maryland were to permanently shift to Eastern Daylight Time, the sun would not rise until approximately 8:30 a.m. during the shortest days of winter. As a result, AACPS students would be walking to school or bus stops in the dark for many more winter mornings during the school year. Student safety is of utmost importance to AACPS and requiring students to walk to school and bus stops in the dark creates a genuine safety concern. If this bill were to become law, AACPS would be required to adjust high school start time two hours later than the current start time in order to meet recommended health guidelines. In addition, many elementary and middle schools would need adjust start times by an hour. Such significant adjustments would greatly disrupt the lives of students and families throughout the State, forcing many school systems to impose school hours that could be detrimental to student health, well-being, and academics.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on SB840.