



PSSAM
Public School Superintendents' Association
OF MARYLAND

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BILL: HB 546

TITLE: Education - Service Year Option Program - Establishment (Serving Every Region Through Vocational Exploration Act of 2023)

DATE: February 21, 2023

POSITION: Support

COMMITTEE: Appropriations

CONTACT: Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four local school superintendents, **supports** House Bill 546.

House Bill 546 would establish a Service Year Option Program for eligible Maryland high school graduates. The program, set to be administered by the Department of Service and Civic Innovation, would extend the opportunity to recent graduates to work for a variety of community organizations, public programs, and private entities in Maryland. This program ensures that participants receive an appropriate salary, as well as other tangible benefits from collaboration with on-site supervisors such as college and career counseling, workforce training, and financial literacy education.

PSSAM applauds the Governor's initiative in introducing a state-wide Service Year Option Program for Maryland graduates. As Maryland's top educational leaders, superintendents often witness the profound impact experiential learning opportunities can have on students. Service year programs have been shown to have a positive impact on students and produce a wide range of beneficial outcomes, including improved academic performance in higher education, increased civic engagement, and improved job prospects. Through the establishment of a Service Year Option Program in Maryland, young adults will have the opportunity to develop important career and life skills, such as communication, problem-solving, and leadership qualities.

PSSAM is eager to support such a program with the potential to benefit the symbiotic relationship between Maryland students and communities. Through the opportunity to engage in service work, recent graduates would be able to make a positive impact in their communities, explore college and career opportunities, and contribute to the greater good. PSSAM believes that this program would help to build stronger, more vibrant communities throughout Maryland.

For these reasons, PSSAM **supports** House Bill 546 and urges a favorable committee report.