

HB0189 ~ Support
Aaron Olivas
3olivaskla@gmail.com

Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark, and all other members of the Ways and Means Committee,

I am a high school student in my junior year in BCPS. Every regular school day over the last 3 years, I have woken up at egregious hours with very limited sleep. There are many nights where I stay up late to do my work then wake up at 5:30 am with considerably less sleep than that which is medically recommended. Burdened with this lack of sleep, I must begin my school day at 7:40 am, often before the sun is yet up. I can recall many times where thanks to poor sleep the night before, I am unable to fight off my body's natural desires and fall back asleep and later show up late, being marked negatively for such. I find the expectancy to function at 7:40 am in full capacity with any information retention completely unreasonable. I am far from alone in this matter.

Many mornings, I arrive at my first period class and find my peers in a half waken state, some unconscious altogether, unable to keep up with the intense demands. Among my friends, sleep deprivation runs rampant and is only immensely aided by the early start. The desire for later start times is a desire that my peers across at least 3 Maryland counties can agree with. This desire is further supported by facts and reliable research. According to an article published less than a month ago from Time Magazine, earlier school start times are strongly linked to a plethora of negative effects including substance abuse, lower grades, car accidents, depression, obesity, anxiety and several more. Further still, this article shows that its induction of sleep deprivation prevents us students from actually solidifying our learned information into memory. Later start times are scientifically proven to help alleviate burdens on students and improve the effects of the educational system on adolescents.

This bill, HB0189, aims to end these irrational hours. This bill's provisions include that which would move the start times up to 8:30 am. While I am on track to graduate long before this takes effect, it is important to me that high schoolers coming after me will themselves greatly benefit from the later start. For the sake of our sleep and our educational experience, It is imperative that this bill is passed through the general assembly. I urge the Committee to give HB0189 a favorable report.