

BILL: House Bill 1697
TITLE: Education - Commercial Gaming Revenues - Constitutional Amendment
DATE: March 8, 2018
POSITION: SUPPORT
COMMITTEE: Appropriations Committee
Ways and Means Committee
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The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all of the state's local boards of education, supports House Bill 1697.

House Bill 1697 would propose an amendment to the Maryland State Constitution to convert the Education Trust Fund as a repository of gaming revenue which may be supplanted, into a source of supplemental education funding which must be included in the Governor's annual state budgets in excess of what is otherwise mandated by school funding formulas. MABE supports this bill because it would ensure that gaming revenue in the Education Trust Fund contributes to real progress towards a world class public school system throughout Maryland.

The bill includes the following Constitutional Amendment language:

“Requires the Governor to include in the annual State budget, as supplemental funding for prekindergarten through grade 12 in public schools, the revenues from video lottery operation licenses and any other commercial gaming dedicated to public education in an amount above the level of State funding for education in public schools in fiscal year 2020 in the following amounts: \$125 million in fiscal year 2021; \$250 million in fiscal year 2022; \$375 million in fiscal year 2023; and 100% of commercial gaming revenues dedicated to public education in fiscal year 2024 and each fiscal year thereafter.”

The supplemental funding to be provided by this legislation and Constitutional Amendment may be used to:

- Ensure access for all students to a world class public education that prepares them to compete in the global economy of today and the future;
- Provide funding to expand access to high-quality early childhood education programs;
- Provide greater opportunities for students to participate in career and technical education programs that lead to an identified job skill or certificate and successful careers;
- Allow students to obtain college credit and degrees while in high school at no cost to the students;
- Support the advancement and professionalization of the teaching profession in public schools; and
- Ensure high quality school facilities and learning environments for all students.

Again, MABE strongly supports this legislation as essential to the goal of securing meaningful increases in State funding for public schools for the first time since before the great recession. Clearly, supplemental funding provided from gaming revenue would contribute to the State's ability to launch efforts to fully fund and implement many of the recommendations being developed and costed-out by the Kirwan Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education.

For these reasons, MABE urges a favorable report on House Bill 1697.