

BILL: House Bill 126
TITLE: General Provisions – Standard Time – Year-Round Daylight Saving Time
POSITION: OPPOSE
DATE: March 24, 2022
COMMITTEE: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) opposes Senate Bill 534, which is intended to require the standard time in Maryland to be Eastern Daylight Time year-round and establish year-round Daylight Savings Time (DST) in the State.

MABE shares the concerns of our local boards of education that one of the most foreseeable outcomes of adopting year-round Daylight Savings Time would be negative impacts on school system efforts to establish later school start times. Local boards of education have been responding to parent and student input in recent years to consider major revisions to the organization of the school day, focusing primarily on adopting later start-times for high schools.

System-wide reforms to adopt later school start-times involve significant study and alignment of policies and budgets provide necessary modifications to student transportation scheduling, numbers of school buses and drivers, and impacts on after school activities. Much of this work has been undertaken in recent years, without consideration for the potential adoption of year-round Daylight Savings Time. In this way, legislation demanding such a change would further complicate an already complex set of considerations in adapting school day schedules and start times to best meet the needs of students.

MABE and all local boards of education recognize that developing a healthy school environment which promotes student health, well-being, and the ability to learn must be our highest priority. In this context, several local boards have adopted or are considering adopting later school start times based on assessments of the impact on student health, safety, and student developmental needs. Under House Bill 126, and a permanent 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, students would be walking to school or bus stops in the dark for many more winter mornings during the school year.

MABE recognizes and appreciates that House Bill 126, unlike other similar legislation, would make Maryland's transition to year-round Daylight Savings Time contingent on federal law being amended to allow a state to observe a year-round standard time that is consistent with Eastern Daylight Time. However, MABE believes the potential negative consequences of that eventual outcome warrants the legislature's rejection of the proposal to enact legislation that could be triggered by this federal action.

For the reasons outlined above, MABE requests an unfavorable report on House Bill 126.