



BILL: House Bill 798
TITLE: Visual Impairments – Requirements for Student Screening
DATE: February 22, 2018
POSITION: Oppose
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
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House Bill 798 requires a vision screening provided to certain students in public schools to include the administration of a screening for certain visual impairments; requiring screenings to be given in certain years to certain students unless evidence is presented that the student has been tested by certain doctors or screened for the symptoms of certain visual impairments; etc.

PSSAM appreciates the intent of this legislation. However, we **oppose** House Bill 798.

PSSAM has always supported visual screening of students. The well-being of our students is a top priority for local superintendents. We support current law that requires all students have vision screenings several times during a student's academic years from kindergarten through high school.

House Bill 798 requires that the screening for vision include screening for visual impairments to identify 11 symptoms of multiple vision disorders. We believe that identifying specific visual impairments should remain with health care practitioners. These trained professionals have the necessary education and expertise to identify and determine appropriate education supports for students with visual impairments. We also believe that the county health department should provide all follow-up action and required notifications, including educational materials, on the visual impairment screening to parents/guardians as well as the Maryland Department of Health.

For the reasons stated above, PSSAM **opposes** House Bill 798 and urges an unfavorable committee report.