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BILL: House Bill 1078
TITLE: Public School Holidays – Presidents’ Day and Easter
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POSITION: SUPPORT
COMMITTEE: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
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House Bill 1078 repeals a provision of law designating Presidents' Day and the Monday after Easter as public school holidays; and requiring public schools to devote part of the day to appropriate exercises for the observance of Presidents' Day.

PSSAM thanks the sponsor and fully **supports** House Bill 1078.

The school calendar is a very complicated and important matter in every school community. Maryland’s twenty-four school systems each convene calendar committees that include all interested school and community stakeholders to ensure they have input into the process before a final calendar is approved by the local school board. Development of the school calendar also must consider athletic programs, federal and state-mandated testing programs, administrative and professional development days for educators, collective bargaining agreements, parent-teacher conference dates, religious and community holidays and events, forecasting inclement weather days, and much more.

PSSAM strongly advocates that school-related calendar decisions should be determined locally and based on meeting the academic needs of our students, providing professional development for our faculties, and honoring the wishes of our communities. Meeting the 180-day school calendar regulation is complex for Maryland’s twenty-four school systems. On August 31, 2016, Governor Larry Hogan issued an Executive Order which requires all Maryland public schools to open for pupil attendance no earlier than the Tuesday immediately following the nationally observed Labor Day holiday. The Executive Order also requires that the school year for every public school shall be no later than June 15. The compressed school year has created numerous and complex situations that school systems are working hard to address.

House Bill 1078 would provide local school systems with much needed flexibility regarding school calendars. We appreciate the intent of this legislation to repeal the designation of Presidents’ Day and the Monday after Easter as required public school holidays. We would like to assure the sponsor that if a school system opted for the flexibility granted by this legislation, appropriate exercises for the observance of Presidents’ Day would be conducted.

For the reasons stated above, PSSAM fully supports House Bill 1078 and request a favorable committee report.