



Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director

BILL:	House Bill 612
TITLE:	Recovery for the Economy, Livelihoods, Industries, Entrepreneurs, and Families (RELIEF) Act
DATE:	February 4, 2021
POSITION:	Support with Amendments
COMMITTEE:	Ways and Means
CONTACT:	Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

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This emergency Administration bill (1) provides up to \$750 in economic impact payments to a taxpayer who claims the State earned income tax credit in certain tax years; (2) exempts from the State income tax the unemployment insurance (UI) benefits received by an individual; (3) authorizes certain businesses to retain an increased sales and use tax vendor credit; (4) excludes fiscal 2020 and 2021 from the multi-year lookback periods generally used to establish employer UI taxes each year; (5) exempts from the State income tax certain coronavirus relief payments; and (6) authorizes the Department of Commerce (Commerce) to convert certain business loans into grants. The bill also establishes reporting requirements for the Comptroller.

Most of the provisions of this legislation do not materially affect the operations of Maryland's public schools, but PSSAM supports this bill as it was amended in the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee. Specifically, we support the additional \$50 million added to help Local Education Agencies (LEAs) provide eight (8) weeks of summer school or tutoring services during the summer. Another provision added was \$50 million to LEAs to safely move toward delivering in-person education with priority given to special education students, students without reliable broadband service, and students who have shown a need for in-person education in order to succeed.

We are immensely grateful for this addition in the Budget and Taxation Committee and hope that the entire Senate and the House Ways and Means Committee will accept these two provisions. The pandemic has created incredible operational challenges in providing an adequate public education. To begin our recovery, many LEAs will start with a "hybrid" return-to-school model. Research has shown that the "hybrid" model is the most expensive delivery of education, but one we are committed to implementing in order to start to bring all of our students back to classrooms. At this time, it is difficult to estimate what additional funding is needed to deal with the unknown, but expected increased costs. The \$50 million provision to help bring students back to school will greatly aid in our efforts.

Similarly, we do not yet know what effect this "disrupted learning" will have on students, but the \$50 million addition aimed at summer school and tutoring is right in line with every LEA's recovery plan and the funds are greatly appreciated.

Therefore, PSSAM **supports** House Bill 612 **with the two specific amendments** identified above and requests a favorable committee report.

*One Voice, One Vision for Maryland's Students*

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