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BILL: House Bill 400
TITLE: Education – Public School Holidays – Presidents’ Day and Easter Monday
DATE: February 14, 2017
POSITION: SUPPORT
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
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House Bill 400 repeals the requirement that Presidents' Day and the Monday after Easter be public school holidays; and authorizing a county board of education to designate Presidents' Day and the Monday after Easter as public school holidays.

PSSAM **supports** House Bill 400 for the reasons detailed below.

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.

Maryland public schools must be open for at least 180 days during a 10-month period. Local school systems have control over their school calendars to meet the 180 day mandate. However, in August 2016, the Governor issued an Executive Order that requires local school systems to open schools for student attendance no earlier than the Tuesday following the Labor Day holiday and to conclude no later than June 15 beginning in the 2017-2018 school year. In addition, State law has designated numerous days as public school holidays. Presidents’ Day and the Monday after Easter are two of the designated holidays. These State mandates have made it increasingly difficult for local school systems to meet the 180 day calendar in a compressed period of time.

House Bill 400 provides flexibility to local school systems regarding public school holidays for Presidents’ Day and the Monday after Easter. Working with our school and community stakeholders, local superintendents will now be able to better determine the best course of action concerning these two days that will be more conducive to our individual calendar needs.

As previously stated, PSSAM **SUPPORTS** House Bill 400.