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BILL: House Bill 980
TITLE: Children Exempt From Public School Attendance – Participation in Public High School Clubs and Activities
DATE: March 10, 2017
POSITION: OPPOSE
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
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House Bill 980 requires local school systems to allow a specified child who is exempt from public school attendance to participate in specified clubs and activities beginning September 1, 2017; requiring a child who participates in specified activities to participate with a specified high school, meet specified eligibility or tryout criteria, meet equivalent academic requirements, comply with specified standards of performance and behavior, and pay any out-of-pocket expenses incurred by the school due to the child's participation.

PSSAM **opposes** House Bill 980, which would require public schools to allow home schooled students to participate in extracurricular activities. This law would be in conflict with existing State law.

Currently, COMAR 13A.10.01 Home Instruction, *Code of Maryland Regulation*, allows home schooled students to participate voluntarily in standardized testing, but not in other courses or activities in public school programs. In most cases, extracurricular activities are aligned with the regular curriculum of which home schooled students are not a part. In addition, school administrators charged with the overall safety and well-being of the students would be required to assume responsibility for students that are not enrolled in the public school. This bill would provide administrators with limited authority to protect the school's interests when dealing with issues concerning non-enrolled students.

Another concern regarding this bill centers on the eligibility of students who represent schools in interscholastic events. State regulations require students to be officially registered and attending a public school. Students not attending the public school would not be subjected to the same eligibility criteria because academic and attendance standards of home school are not comparable to those of the public school. In the event of injuries or other mishaps, the public school students would be covered. Most home school students would not have the same coverage. This could become a liability to a public school.

For the reasons noted above, PSSAM **opposes** HB 980.