

Post-Labor Day school start merits investigation

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Advertisement

The report by Maryland Comptroller Peter Franchot on the economic benefits to Maryland from a post-Labor Day school start deserves far more respect, attention and consideration than given to it in a recent editorial in The Sun ("One week and counting," Aug. 19).

The comptroller's report follows approval of legislation in the last General Assembly session to establish a task force to study a post-Labor Day start date for Maryland public schools.

It is worth noting that following public hearings in both the House and the Senate, the legislation calling for this study passed the Senate 46 to 1, passed the House of Delegates 124 to 6 and was signed into law by Gov. Martin O'Malley.

Members of the General Assembly felt that this issue merited a thorough discussion considering that there are a number of neighboring states who see the advantage of a post Labor Day school start. Virginia law already provides for a post-Labor Day school start date. Delaware just approved a task force to study the concept and legislation to require a post-Labor Day school start has been introduced in Pennsylvania.

It is also worth noting that the very first charge to the Maryland task force is to study the impact of moving the start date of the public school year on the education system including the academic calendar, planning administration and facilities.

It is very clear that elected officials from across Maryland place very high value on determining if there would be any negative impact on the quality of instruction in Maryland public schools from any school calendar changes.

It is also very clear from the timeline approved in the study legislation that elected officials from across Maryland place very high value on thoughtful deliberation and dialogue on this issue. The final report from the task force will be completed no later than June of 2014. Based on that schedule, any legislation that may be considered as a result of its recommendations will not even be considered until the General Assembly convenes in January, 2015. That is more than ample time to prepare for any impacted parties to make changes that may occur.

As this study process moves forward, the Sun's editorial board would best serve the public by waiting until the task force has issues its findings before prejudging an issue which could have a profound effect on the economy and education system of Maryland.

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