

**LABOR DAY SCHOOL HOLIDAY:
REMOVE SUNSET**

**House Bill 4491 as introduced
First Analysis (6-14-01)**

**Sponsor: Rep. Scott Shackleton
Committee: Commerce**

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

For a number of years, there was a debate about when schools should open in the fall and who should decide. Although the Labor Day holiday traditionally marks the end of the summer season, many school districts have adopted school calendars with school-starting dates before Labor Day. Put in general terms, the state's tourism and travel industry advocated that schools should not be allowed to begin until after Labor Day, both to retain young workers and to allow families to vacation, while much of the school community preferred that local schools maintain control over their calendars. Legislation enacted last session (Public Act 141 of 1999, House Bill 4099) created a compromise solution: it did not address when the school year should begin but instead prohibited public schools from holding classes on the Friday before Labor Day. This prohibition was put in place through the 2002-2003 school year.

An earlier version of the legislation enacted last session would have created a special school calendar task force made up of representatives of business and education to study the educational and economic impact of not holding school on the Friday before Labor Day and on the potential impact of requiring that the school year not begin until after Labor Day. However, the task force provision was not enacted. Some people say that the 2003 sunset makes little sense without the task force report and ought to be removed, with the result that the school holiday become permanent.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

Public Act 141 of 1999 prohibited public schools from holding classes on the Friday before Labor Day during the 2000-2001, 2001-2002, and 2002-2003 school years. (Labor Day is defined as the first Monday in September.) House Bill 4491 would amend the Revised School Code to delete the references to the specific school years, so that the prohibition would be in place indefinitely.

[The act currently contains an exception: it does not apply where it would contravene a collective bargaining agreement providing a complete school calendar in effect as of May 1, 1999, until that agreement expired.]

MCL 380.1284b

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

The House Fiscal Agency has noted that, since schools simply make up the instructional time lost on the Friday before Labor Day, there would be no impact on the number of total instructional days and so no fiscal impact. (Fiscal Note date 6-4-01)

ARGUMENTS:

For:

The current prohibition on holding school on the Friday before Labor Day is a sensible approach that benefits the state's tourist industry and its families. Reports from the tourist industry suggest that many families did take advantage of the four-day weekend last year, the first year the law was in effect. Some hotels and resorts report increased business, which they attribute to the mandated extra day of the weekend. A survey conducted by the Tourism Industry Coalition of Michigan indicated that the new law made making travel plans easier for one-third of those surveyed. Labor Day weekend is an important holiday for much of Michigan's tourism sector, and the extra day provides a significant boost. The expanded holiday also gives families a chance to spend time together, whether they travel or not. The compromise solution seems to be working and has widespread support; there is no reason why it should not be extended indefinitely.

Against:

Some people oppose this concept in principle, on the grounds that school districts should have control over

their own calendars and should make calendar decisions based on local educational considerations. It should be noted that this was a controversial proposal when before the legislature. Although a new day off was created for students, no new holiday was created for parents, and for some people this has complicated their lives.

POSITIONS:

The Michigan Hotel, Motel, and Resort Association supports the bill. (6-12-01)

The Michigan Education Association supports the bill. (6-12-01)

The Michigan Boating Industry Association has indicated support for the bill. (6-12-01)

The Michigan Restaurant Association has indicated support for the bill. (6-12-01)

The Detroit Metro Convention and Visitors Bureau has indicated support for the bill. (6-12-01)

The Michigan Grocers Association has indicated support for the bill. (6-12-01)

The Michigan RV and Campground Association has indicated support for the bill. (6-6-01)

The Michigan Association of School Boards has indicated opposition to the bill. (6-12-01)

Analyst: C. Couch

■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.