



BILL NO.: House Bill 373

TITLE: **Education – Age for Compulsory Public School Attendance – Exemptions**

POSITION: **OPPOSE**

DATE: March 29, 2012

COMMITTEE: Ways and Means

CONTACT: Michael Sanderson

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** HB 373. This bill would extend the period of compulsory attendance in public schools for students not falling into a number of current exemption categories. MACo's concerns with the legislation lie in the mandated spending it would drive by both the state and county governments.

The Department of Legislative Services' fiscal and policy note on HB 373 estimates the state cost of HB 373 at more than \$50 million annually. In addition, though not clearly spelled out in the fiscal note, county governments would be obliged to make a massive new contribution to public school budgets as well, as the additional enrollment compelled under HB 373 would trigger tens of millions in new mandated county spending, under the (about to be toughened) maintenance of effort requirement.

During a time when the state faces such a daunting structural deficit with massive costs shifts and revenue increases being contemplated, MACo is concerned about the launching of additional mandated funding programs. Further, the requirement of still more funding from each jurisdiction on top of previous requirements - the new costs of teacher pensions and an ever-escalating maintenance of effort law - would unfairly burden county governments already being asked to bear too large a share of the state's fiscal burden.

Regardless of any programmatic merits of the legislation, the cost to both the State and county governments of this new initiative are unreasonable and unsustainable. For this reason, MACo urges the Committee to give HB 373 an **UNFAVORABLE** report.