

INFORMATIONAL
House Bill 160
Elementary and Secondary Schools - Workplace Readiness Week - Establishment

House Ways and Means Committee
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Lauren Lamb
Government Relations

The Maryland State Education Association offers this informational testimony on House Bill 160, which would establish the third week in April as Workplace Readiness Week and require county boards of education to establish a specific program, including information on labor laws and labor history, to be held during Workplace Readiness Week.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students for the careers and jobs of the future. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

As a union of educators, we sincerely appreciate the sponsor's effort to highlight the rights of working people and the history of the labor movement in the U.S. It is to society's collective benefit that students know their rights as they enter the workforce and understand the role and history of labor organizations in various industries.

Simultaneously, we have longstanding concerns about legislatively mandating specific curriculum content. It is the duty of the State Board, county boards, and educators to determine instructional standards and shape the scope and sequence of content, respectively. Adding to the content through the General Assembly risks reducing the time available for each curriculum standard. In the 180-day school year, a week is a considerable amount of instructional time, and the timeline given is likely to be overly rigid as educators must adapt their lessons to students' needs.

While we see the value in highlighting labor rights and movements in curriculum, we would urge that any proposed changes to instructional standards or content are approached through the State Board and other appropriate entities, not through legislation.