

School Calendar Change Approved By Education Committee

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The House Education Committee on Tuesday approved House Bill 593 that would permit school districts to start classes on the second Monday in August. The committee revisited the issue of school starting dates because of concerns from school administrators, school boards and teachers who say the 2004 calendar law is not benefiting schools or students.

The current law requires schools in all 115 districts to begin the school year no sooner than Aug. 25 and end by June 10 — with exceptions for year-round schools and a few districts that receive a waiver because they experience inclement winter weather conditions.

The late start date extends the fall semester for high school students into mid-January and results in end-of-course exams in challenging subjects being taken after winter vacation. Bill sponsors have also noted that the current calendar law limits the ability of high school students to enroll in community college courses because the second semester of college starts two weeks before high school exams are completed in late January.

The approved bill was referred to the House Commerce Committee, where it will face continued debate and stronger opposition from tourism industry lobbyists who say this proposed calendar change will cost the state millions of dollars in tourism revenue through lost summer vacation time.

NCASA members are encouraged to contact all House Commerce Committee members before April 29 to urge them to support House Bill 593. Contact information is available at: <http://www.ncasa.net/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=241>.