



CARMINE L. GENTILE  
STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
House of Representatives  
State House, Boston 02133-1054

Committees:  
Vice Chair, Higher Education  
Environment, Natural Resources  
and Agriculture  
State Administration  
and Regulatory Oversight  
Elder Affairs  
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May 2, 2023

Representative Denise C. Garlick, Chair  
Joint Committee on Education  
State House, Room 473G  
Boston, MA, 02133

Senator Jason Lewis, Chair  
Joint Committee on Education  
State House, Room 511-B  
Boston, MA, 02133

Dear Chair Garlick and Chair Lewis,

I write to you in support of my sponsored legislation H.486, *Resolve creating a special commission to study school starting times and schedules*, which is before the Joint Committee on Education.

I have filed this legislation because the American Academy of Pediatrics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and American Medical Association recommend that middle and high schools start class no earlier than 8:30am. Schools that fail to follow this recommendation are harming their students by putting them at an increased risk of a drowsy-driving-related car crashes, damaging their academic performance, and making them more likely to experience myriad other adverse effects by not giving adolescent students enough time to sleep. This is a public health issue that our schools are most affected by and are uniquely able to respond to.

I recognize that this is a complex issue with a massive scale. Shifting start times to 8.30am or later has many acute effects including the availability of athletic fields and other consequences, including the flow of traffic in a community. For this reason, the Commonwealth must act together and with a full understanding of these hurdles to ease the process through collective action. I believe a special commission with representatives from all the principally effected parties is an appropriate way for Massachusetts to continue to confront this (a number of secondary school districts have already changed to 8:00-8:30AM starts). H.486 is written with many of those stakeholders in mind. We would welcome others to the table so that all voices can be heard in the conversation around this topic.

A version of this bill was redrafted with several edits and reported favorably from the Joint Committee on Education in the 192<sup>nd</sup> Session. This session, I filed the Committee redraft of last session's bill.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony and my request that the committee report this legislation favorably.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Carmine L. Gentile", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Carmine L. Gentile  
State Representation  
13<sup>th</sup> Middlesex District