

ASSEMBLY STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 1271

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: DECEMBER 18, 2023

The Assembly State and Local Government Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 1271 (1R).

As amended, this bill would permit public school pupils in grades six through 12 one State-excused absence to attend a civic event each school year. School districts would be permitted to provide additional excused absences for such purposes. Excused absences taken under this bill would not be reflected on student attendance records.

Parents or guardians of pupils who wish to use an excused absence under the bill would be required to provide a signed written notice of the intended excused absence at least five school days in advance of the intended excused absence and such documentation as the school district deems necessary to prove that the pupil meets the requirements for an excused absence under the bill.

The bill defines “civic event” as an event sponsored by a government entity, a community-based organization, or a nonprofit organization that incorporates elements of service learning whereby students learn and develop through organized service. A civic event would also address an issue of public concern such as community health and safety or environmental, economic, or community well-being.

The Commissioner of Education, with the approval of the State Board of Education, would provide guidance to school districts relative to absences for civic events.

As amended and reported by the committee, this bill is identical to Senate Bill No. 2304 (2R), which also was amended and reported by the committee on this same date.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to:

- change the definition of a “civic event” to provide that the event would incorporate elements of service learning whereby students learn and develop through organized service;
- provide that a signed written notice is to be submitted by a parent or guardian at least five school days in advance of a student’s intended excused absence to attend a civic event;
- require the Commissioner of Education, with the approval of the State Board of Education, to provide guidance to school districts relative to absences for civic events; and
- insert a rulemaking provision to effectuate the provisions of the bill.