

SENATE, No. 2304

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 21, 2022

Sponsored by:

Senator VIN GOPAL

District 11 (Monmouth)

Senator JAMES BEACH

District 6 (Burlington and Camden)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senator Zwicker

SYNOPSIS

Permits excused absences for students who attend civic events.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 5/9/2022)

S2304 GOPAL, BEACH

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1 AN ACT concerning excused absences from public school for civic
2 events and supplementing chapter 36 of Title 18A of the New
3 Jersey Statutes.

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5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
6 of New Jersey:

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8 1. As used in this act, “civic event” means an event sponsored
9 by a government entity, the community, or a local nonprofit
10 organization to address an issue of public concern such as
11 community health and safety or environmental, economic, or
12 community well-being.

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14 2. a. Notwithstanding any law, rule, or regulation to the
15 contrary, a pupil of a public school in grades six through 12 who is
16 absent from school to attend a civic event shall have one absence
17 each school year for that purpose recorded as an excused absence
18 on the pupil’s attendance record or on that of any group or class of
19 which the pupil is a member. A board of education may permit
20 additional excused absences for such purposes. Any transcript,
21 application, employment form, or any similar form on which
22 information concerning a pupil’s attendance record is requested
23 shall show, with respect to absences, only absences other than
24 excused absences authorized pursuant to this subsection.

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26 b. The parent or guardian of a pupil shall provide at least five
27 school days’ notice in advance of the intended excused absence and
28 such documentation as the superintendent or administrative
29 principal of the school district deems necessary to prove that the
30 pupil meets the requirements for an excused absence pursuant to
31 subsection a. of this section.

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32 3. The Commissioner of Education, with the approval of the
33 State Board of Education, shall prescribe rules relative to absences
34 for civic events including, but not limited to, a list of civic events
35 where it shall be mandatory to excuse a pupil. Nothing in this
36 section shall be construed to limit the right of a board of education,
37 in its discretion, to excuse absences for civic events not included on
38 the list.

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40 4. This act shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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45 This bill would permit public school pupils in grades six through
46 12 one excused absence to attend a civic event each school year.
47 School districts would be permitted to provide additional excused

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1 absences for such purposes. Excused absences taken under this bill
2 would not be reflected on student attendance records.

3 Parents or guardians of pupils who wish to use an excused
4 absence under this bill would be required to provide at least five
5 school days' notice in advance of the intended excused absence and
6 such documentation as the school district deems necessary to prove
7 that the pupil meets the requirements for an excused absence
8 pursuant to the provisions of this bill.

9 The bill defines "civic event" as an event sponsored by a
10 government entity, the community, or a local nonprofit organization
11 to address an issue of public concern such as community health and
12 safety or environmental, economic, or community well-being.

13 The Commissioner of Education, with the approval of the State
14 Board of Education, would be responsible for prescribing rules
15 relative to absences for civic events. This would include, but not be
16 limited to, a list of civic events where it would be mandatory to
17 excuse a pupil. The bill would not be construed to limit the right of
18 boards of education to excuse absences for civic events not included
19 on the commissioner's list.