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Co-Sponsored by:
Senator Zwicker, Assemblywomen DeFuccio, Reynolds-Jackson, Jaffer,
Assemblyman Benson, Assemblywomen Jasey, Pintor Marin, Murphy,
Swain and Mosquera

SYNOPSIS
Permits excused absences for students who attend civic events.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT
As reported by the Assembly State and Local Government Committee on December 18, 2023, with amendments.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 1/8/2024)
AN ACT concerning excused absences from public school for civic events and supplementing chapter 36 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

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

1. As used in this act, “civic event” means an event sponsored by a government entity, 1[the community] a community-based organization, or a 1[local] nonprofit organization 1[to address] that incorporates elements of service learning whereby students learn and develop through organized service. A civic event shall address an issue of public concern such as community health and safety or environmental, economic, or community well-being.

2. a. Notwithstanding any law, rule, or regulation to the contrary, a pupil of a public school in grades six through 12 who is absent from school to attend a civic event shall have one 1[State-]excused absence each school year for that purpose recorded as an excused absence on the pupil’s attendance record or on that of any group or class of which the pupil is a member 1[provided that a written notice signed by a parent or guardian of the pupil is presented to the proper school authority pursuant to subsection b. of this section]. A board of education may permit additional excused absences for such purposes. Any transcript, application, employment form, or any similar form on which information concerning a pupil’s attendance record is requested shall show, with respect to absences, only absences other than excused absences authorized pursuant to this subsection.

b. The parent or guardian of a pupil shall provide 1[at least five school days’ notice] a signed written notice of an intended excused absence to attend a civic event at least five school days in advance of the intended excused absence and such other documentation as the superintendent or administrative principal of the school district deems necessary to prove that the pupil meets the requirements for an excused absence pursuant to subsection a. of this section.

3. 1[a.] The Commissioner of Education, with the approval of the State Board of Education, shall 1[prescribe rules] provide guidance to school districts relative to 1[excused] absences for civic events 1[including, but not limited to, a list of civic events where it shall be mandatory to excuse a pupil. Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the right of a board of education, in its

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.
Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:
1Senate SED committee amendments adopted May 9, 2022.
2Assembly ASL committee amendments adopted December 18, 2023.
discretion, to excuse absences for civic events not included on the list.\[^1\]

\[^1\]b. The State Board of Education shall promulgate rules and regulations pursuant to the “Administrative Procedure Act,” P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.) necessary to effectuate the provisions of this act.\[^1\]

4. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first apply to the 2023-2024 school year.\[^1\]