

[Second Reprint]

**SENATE, No. 2304**

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**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**  
**220th LEGISLATURE**

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INTRODUCED MARCH 21, 2022

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator VIN GOPAL**

**District 11 (Monmouth)**

**Senator JAMES BEACH**

**District 6 (Burlington and Camden)**

**Assemblyman STERLEY S. STANLEY**

**District 18 (Middlesex)**

**Assemblyman KEVIN J. ROONEY**

**District 40 (Bergen, Essex, Morris and Passaic)**

**Assemblywoman ELLEN J. PARK**

**District 37 (Bergen)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

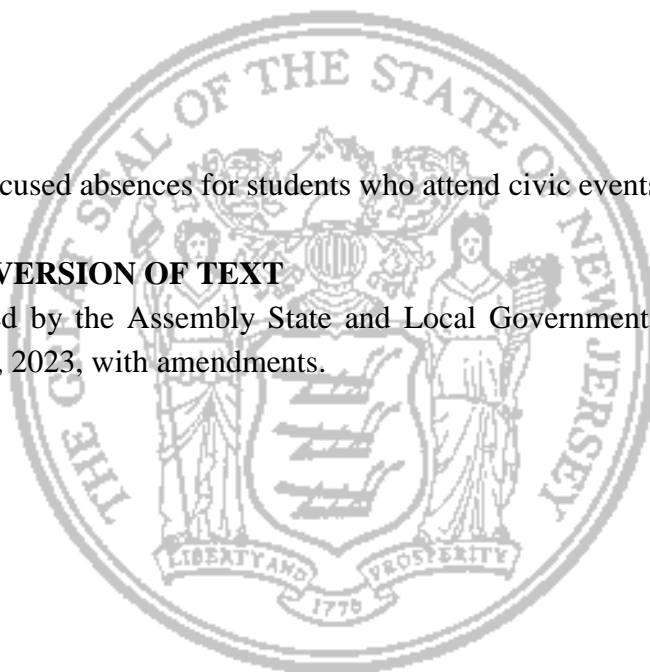
**Senator Zwicker, Assemblywomen DeFuccio, Reynolds-Jackson, Jaffer, Assemblyman Benson, Assemblywomen Jasey, Pintor Marin, Murphy, Swain and Mosquera**

**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)**

S2304 [2R] GOPAL, BEACH

2

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.

4  
5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State  
6 of New Jersey:

7  
8 1. As used in this act, “civic event” means an event sponsored  
9 by a government entity, <sup>1</sup>**the community** a community-based  
10 organization<sup>1</sup>, or a <sup>1</sup>**local**<sup>1</sup> nonprofit organization <sup>1</sup>**to address**  
11 that incorporates elements of service learning whereby students  
12 learn and develop through organized service. A civic event shall  
13 address<sup>1</sup> an issue of public concern such as community health and  
14 safety or environmental, economic, or community well-being.

15  
16 2. a. Notwithstanding any law, rule, or regulation to the  
17 contrary, a pupil of a public school in grades six through 12 who is  
18 absent from school to attend a civic event shall have one <sup>1</sup>State-  
19 excused<sup>1</sup> absence each school year for that purpose recorded as an  
20 excused absence on the pupil’s attendance record or on that of any  
21 group or class of which the pupil is a member <sup>1</sup>, provided that a  
22 written notice signed by a parent or guardian of the pupil is  
23 presented to the proper school authority pursuant to subsection b. of  
24 this section<sup>1</sup>. A board of education may permit additional excused  
25 absences for such purposes. Any transcript, application,  
26 employment form, or any similar form on which information  
27 concerning a pupil’s attendance record is requested shall show, with  
28 respect to absences, only absences other than excused absences  
29 authorized pursuant to this subsection.

30 b. The parent or guardian of a pupil shall provide <sup>1</sup>**at least five**  
31 **school days’ notice** <sup>1</sup>a signed written notice of an intended excused  
32 absence to attend a civic event at least five school days<sup>1</sup> in advance  
33 of the intended excused absence and such <sup>1</sup>other<sup>1</sup> documentation as  
34 the superintendent or administrative principal of the school district  
35 deems necessary to prove that the pupil meets the requirements for  
36 an excused absence pursuant to subsection a. of this section.

37  
38 3. <sup>1</sup>a.<sup>1</sup> The Commissioner of Education, with the approval of  
39 the State Board of Education, shall <sup>1</sup>**prescribe rules** <sup>1</sup>provide  
40 guidance to school districts<sup>1</sup> relative to <sup>1</sup>excused<sup>1</sup> absences for civic  
41 events <sup>1</sup>**including, but not limited to, a list of civic events where it**  
42 shall be mandatory to excuse a pupil. Nothing in this section shall  
43 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:

<sup>1</sup>Senate SED committee amendments adopted May 9, 2022.

<sup>2</sup>Assembly ASL committee amendments adopted December 18, 2023.

1 discretion, to excuse absences for civic events not included on the  
2 list<sup>1</sup>.

3 <sup>1</sup>b. The State Board of Education shall promulgate rules and  
4 regulations pursuant to the “Administrative Procedure Act,”  
5 P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.) necessary to effectuate the  
6 provisions of this act.<sup>1</sup>

7

8 4. This act shall take effect immediately <sup>2</sup>[<sup>1</sup>and shall first  
9 apply to the 2023-2024 school year<sup>1</sup><sup>2</sup>.