

**House File 2286 - Introduced**

HOUSE FILE 2286

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**A BILL FOR**

1 An Act requiring boards of directors of school districts  
2 to adopt policies related to excusing the absences of  
3 students enrolled in grades nine through twelve for civic or  
4 political events.  
5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

1 Section 1. Section 299.1, Code 2024, is amended by adding  
2 the following new subsection:

3 NEW SUBSECTION. 3. *a.* The board of directors of each  
4 public school district shall adopt a policy that requires the  
5 school district to grant a student who is enrolled in grades  
6 nine through twelve at least one excused absence each school  
7 year when the student is absent from school because of the  
8 student's participation in a civic or political event. The  
9 policy shall require all of the following:

10 (1) The board of directors of the school district shall  
11 not grant the student an excused absence to participate in the  
12 civic or political event unless the student gives notice of the  
13 student's intent to participate in the civic or political event  
14 to an administrator employed by the school district in advance  
15 of the civic or political event.

16 (2) The student shall demonstrate the student's knowledge  
17 of the civic or political event in which the student  
18 participated by preparing a short essay, presenting information  
19 related to the civic or political event, or through any  
20 other means the school determines will demonstrate a proper  
21 representation of what the student learned during the civic or  
22 political event.

23 *b.* For purposes of this subsection, "*civic or political*  
24 *event*" means all of the following:

25 (1) Voting in an election.

26 (2) Serving as a poll worker.

27 (3) Participating in a strike.

28 (4) Participating in a public comment period before any  
29 public body.

30 (5) Attending a speech by a candidate for a public office.

31 (6) Attending a political forum.

32 (7) Attending a civic forum.

33 (8) Attending a town hall meeting.

34 EXPLANATION

35 The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with

1           the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

2       This bill requires boards of directors of school districts  
3 to adopt policies related to excusing the absences of students  
4 enrolled in grades 9 through 12 for civic or political events.

5       The bill requires the board of directors of each public  
6 school district to adopt a policy that requires the school  
7 district to grant a student who is enrolled in grades 9  
8 through 12 at least one excused absence each school year when  
9 the student is absent from school because of the student's  
10 participation in a civic or political event. The bill  
11 establishes that such policy is to include a requirement that  
12 the student give notice of the student's intent to participate  
13 in the civic or political event in advance and a requirement  
14 that the student demonstrate what the student learned during  
15 the student's participation in the civic or political event.

16       The bill defines "civic or political event" to mean voting  
17 in an election, serving as a poll worker, participating in a  
18 strike, participating in a public comment period before any  
19 public body, attending a speech by a candidate for a public  
20 office, attending a political forum, attending a civic forum,  
21 or attending a town hall meeting.