

Senate File 2132 - Introduced

SENATE FILE 2132

BY DONAHUE

A BILL FOR

1 An Act requiring boards of directors of school districts and
2 the authorities in charge of accredited nonpublic schools
3 to adopt policies related to excusing the absences of
4 students enrolled in grades nine through twelve for civic or
5 political events.

6 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 and the governing body of each
5 accredited nonpublic school shall adopt a policy that requires
6 the school district or accredited nonpublic school to grant
7 a student who is enrolled in grades nine through twelve at
8 least one excused absence each school year when the student is
9 absent from school because of the student's participation in a
10 civic or political event. The policy shall require all of the
11 following:

12 (1) The board of directors of the school district or the
13 governing body of the accredited nonpublic school shall not
14 grant the student an excused absence to participate in the
15 civic or political event unless the student gives notice of
16 the student's intent to participate in the civic or political
17 event to an administrator employed by the board of directors
18 of the school district or the governing body of the accredited
19 nonpublic school in advance of the civic or political event.

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

27 *b.* For purposes of this subsection, "*civic or political*
28 *event*" includes all of the following:

29 (1) Voting in an election.

30 (2) Serving as a poll worker.

31 (3) Participating in a strike.

32 (4) Participating in a public comment period before any
33 public body.

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

35 (6) Attending a political forum.

1 (7) Attending a civic forum.

2 (8) Attending a town hall meeting.

3 EXPLANATION

4 The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with
5 the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

6 This bill requires boards of directors of school districts
7 and the authorities in charge of accredited nonpublic schools
8 to adopt policies related to excusing the absences of students
9 enrolled in grades 9 through 12 for civic or political events.

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

23 The bill defines "civic or political event" to include
24 voting in an election, serving as a poll worker, participating
25 in a strike, participating in a public comment period before
26 any public body, attending a speech by a candidate for a public
27 office, attending a political forum, attending a civic forum,
28 or attending a town hall meeting.