

# HOUSE BILL 575

F1

(6lr1261)

## ENROLLED BILL

— Ways and Means/Education, Energy, and the Environment —

Introduced by ~~Delegate Wilkins~~ Delegates Wilkins, Addison, Coley, Ebersole, Feldmark, Mireku-North, Palakovich Carr, Pasteur, Patterson, Roberson, Vogel, Wims, and Young

Read and Examined by Proofreaders:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Proofreader.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Proofreader.

Sealed with the Great Seal and presented to the Governor, for his approval this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock, \_\_\_\_\_ M.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Speaker.

### CHAPTER \_\_\_\_\_

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Public Schools – Student Attendance – Excused *or Discretionary* Absences for**  
3 **Civic Engagement**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring *the student attendance policy of the State Department of*  
5 ~~Education and~~ each county board of education to ~~adopt a certain attendance policy~~  
6 ~~for public school students who are engaged in certain civic~~ *include a provision*  
7 *allowing an excused or discretionary absence for a public school student participating*  
8 *in civic engagement* activities; requiring a county board to adopt certain policies and  
9 procedures; and generally relating to student attendance in public schools and  
10 excused *or discretionary* absences.

11 BY adding to  
12 Article – Education

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#### EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.

*Italics* indicate opposite chamber/conference committee amendments.



1 Section 7-301.4  
 2 Annotated Code of Maryland  
 3 (2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

4 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
 5 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

6 **Article – Education**

7 **7-301.4.**

8 (A) IN THIS SECTION, “~~PUBLIC FACING LEGISLATIVE BODY~~” MEANS AN  
 9 ENTITY THAT:

10 (1) MEETS TO SET OR CARRY OUT PUBLIC POLICY;

11 (2) IS SUBJECT TO THE OPEN MEETINGS ACT; AND

12 (3) CONSISTS OF MEMBERS WHO ARE ELECTED OR APPOINTED BY  
 13 THE GOVERNOR OR A LOCAL EXECUTIVE AUTHORITY.

14 ~~(B) (1) SUBJECT TO SUBSECTION (B) (C) OF THIS SECTION, THE~~  
 15 ~~DEPARTMENT AND EACH COUNTY BOARD SHALL ADOPT AN ATTENDANCE POLICY~~  
 16 ~~FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS THAT TREATS A STUDENT’S ABSENCE AS EXCUSED~~  
 17 ~~IF, DURING A REGULAR SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY A PUBLIC FACING~~  
 18 ~~BODY, THE STUDENT:~~

19 (B) (1) THE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY OF A COUNTY BOARD SHALL  
 20 INCLUDE A PROVISION ALLOWING AN EXCUSED OR DISCRETIONARY ABSENCE FOR A  
 21 PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENT PARTICIPATING IN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES.

22 (2) CIVIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES SHALL INCLUDE:

23 (I) ~~TESTIFIES~~ TESTIFYING VIRTUALLY OR IN PERSON AT A  
 24 HEARING OF ~~ANY COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY A PUBLIC FACING~~  
 25 LEGISLATIVE BODY; OR

26 (II) ~~CONDUCTS CIVIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING:~~

27 ~~1.~~ MEETING WITH LEGISLATORS MEMBERS OF THE A  
 28 PUBLIC FACING LEGISLATIVE BODY; AND

1 ~~2. (III) ADVOCATING FOR OR AGAINST LEGISLATION~~  
2 ~~AND CONTRIBUTING TO THE CONSIDERATION, DEVELOPMENT, OR~~  
3 ~~IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY ISSUES; AND~~

4 ~~3. OTHER ACTIVITIES DEEMED TO BE CIVIC~~  
5 ~~ENGAGEMENT BY THE DEPARTMENT AND THE APPLICABLE COUNTY BOARD OR AND~~

6 ~~(H) (IV) PARTICIPATES PARTICIPATING IN THE MARYLAND~~  
7 ~~GENERAL ASSEMBLY PAGE PROGRAM.~~

8 ~~(2) (3) (I)~~ IF THE ATTENDANCE POLICY REQUIRES A NOTE TO  
9 EXCUSE AN ABSENCE, THE POLICY SHALL AUTHORIZE AN APPROPRIATE  
10 REPRESENTATIVE TO PROVIDE A NOTE OR REASONABLE DOCUMENTATION TO  
11 EXCUSE THE STUDENT’S ABSENCE.

12 ~~(H) AN EXCUSED ABSENCE UNDER THIS SECTION IS A LAWFUL~~  
13 ~~ABSENCE AND MAY NOT BE INCLUDED IN A CALCULATION OF CHRONIC~~  
14 ~~ABSENTEEISM FOR THE STUDENT OR THE SCHOOL.~~

15 ~~(B) (C) (1)~~ A COUNTY BOARD SHALL ADOPT POLICIES AND  
16 PROCEDURES TO CARRY OUT THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS SECTION.

17 ~~(2) POLICIES AND PROCEDURES ADOPTED UNDER THIS SUBSECTION~~  
18 ~~SHALL AUTHORIZE A STUDENT TO BE EXCUSED FOR AT:~~

19 ~~(I) AT LEAST 15 HOURS OR 2 SCHOOL DAYS TO TESTIFY OR~~  
20 ~~CONDUCT CIVIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES UNDER SUBSECTION (A)(1) (B)(1)(I) OR~~  
21 ~~(H) OF THIS SECTION; OR~~

22 ~~(H) THE LENGTH OF TIME OF THE PAGE PROGRAM FOR CIVIC~~  
23 ~~ENGAGEMENT CONDUCTED UNDER SUBSECTION (B)(1)(III) OF THIS SECTION.~~

24 ~~(3) EXCUSED ABSENCES FOR TESTIFYING OR CONDUCTING CIVIC~~  
25 ~~ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES UNDER SUBSECTION (B)(1) OF THIS SECTION SHALL BE IN~~  
26 ~~ADDITION TO ANY EXCUSED ABSENCES UNDER EXISTING POLICIES OR PROCEDURES~~  
27 ~~OF THE COUNTY BOARD.~~

28 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July  
29 1, 2026.