

HOUSE BILL 575

F1

6lr1261

By: **Delegate Wilkins**

Introduced and read first time: January 28, 2026

Assigned to: Ways and Means

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

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

3 FOR the purpose of requiring the State Department of Education and each county board of
4 education to adopt a certain attendance policy for public school students who are
5 engaged in certain civic activities; requiring a county board to adopt certain policies
6 and procedures; and generally relating to student attendance in public schools and
7 excused absences.

8 BY adding to

9 Article – Education

10 Section 7–301.4

11 Annotated Code of Maryland

12 (2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

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

15 **Article – Education**

16 **7–301.4.**

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

21 **(I) TESTIFIES VIRTUALLY OR IN PERSON AT A HEARING OF ANY**
22 **COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY; OR**

23 **(II) CONDUCTS CIVIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING:**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



- 1 **1. MEETING WITH LEGISLATORS;**
- 2 **2. ADVOCATING FOR OR AGAINST LEGISLATION AND**
3 **POLICY ISSUES; AND**
- 4 **3. OTHER ACTIVITIES DEEMED TO BE CIVIC**
5 **ENGAGEMENT BY THE DEPARTMENT AND THE APPLICABLE COUNTY BOARD.**

6 **(2) (I) IF THE ATTENDANCE POLICY REQUIRES A NOTE TO EXCUSE**
7 **AN ABSENCE, THE POLICY SHALL AUTHORIZE AN APPROPRIATE REPRESENTATIVE**
8 **TO PROVIDE A NOTE OR REASONABLE DOCUMENTATION TO EXCUSE THE STUDENT'S**
9 **ABSENCE.**

10 **(II) AN EXCUSED ABSENCE UNDER THIS SECTION IS A LAWFUL**
11 **ABSENCE AND MAY NOT BE INCLUDED IN A CALCULATION OF CHRONIC**
12 **ABSENTEEISM FOR THE STUDENT OR THE SCHOOL.**

13 **(B) (1) A COUNTY BOARD SHALL ADOPT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TO**
14 **CARRY OUT THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS SECTION.**

15 **(2) POLICIES AND PROCEDURES ADOPTED UNDER THIS SUBSECTION**
16 **SHALL AUTHORIZE A STUDENT TO BE EXCUSED FOR AT LEAST 15 HOURS OR 2**
17 **SCHOOL DAYS TO TESTIFY OR CONDUCT CIVIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES UNDER**
18 **SUBSECTION (A)(1) OF THIS SECTION.**

19 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
20 1, 2026.