

House Bill 1239

By: Representatives Berry of the 56<sup>th</sup>, Wilkerson of the 38<sup>th</sup>, Ali of the 106<sup>th</sup>, Clark of the 108<sup>th</sup>, and Lupton of the 83<sup>rd</sup>

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

1 To amend Subpart 2 of Part 1 of Article 16 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of  
2 Georgia Annotated, relating to compulsory attendance relative to elementary and secondary  
3 school students, so as to require the local governing body for each school system and public  
4 school to adopt a policy providing that students shall be granted not less than two excused  
5 absences per school year for attending or participating in a civic or political event; to require  
6 the State Board of Education to develop a model policy; to provide a definition; to provide  
7 a short title; to provide for an effective date and applicability; to provide for related matters;  
8 to provide for a short title; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

9 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

10 **SECTION 1.**

11 This Act shall be known and may be cited as the "Student Civic Participation and  
12 Encouragement Act."

**SECTION 2.**

Subpart 2 of Part 1 of Article 16 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to compulsory attendance relative to elementary and secondary school students, is amended by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

"20-2-692.5.

(a) As used in this Code section, the term 'civic or political event' means a strike, public comment, candidate speech, political or civil forum, town hall, protest, or similar event.

(b) The local governing body of each local school system and public school shall adopt a policy providing that a student shall be granted not less than two excused absences per school year for attending or participating in a civic or political event. Such policy shall provide for:

(1) Notification by the parent or guardian of a student, or the student if he or she is 18 years of age or older or is an emancipated minor, to the local school system or public school that such student will be absent due to attendance at or participation in a civic or political event, which shall be provided not less than one school day prior to the absence; and

(2) Documentation of absences excused in accordance with this Code section.

(c) The State Board of Education shall develop a model policy for use by local school systems and public schools in accordance with this Code section."

**SECTION 3.**

This Act shall become effective on July 1, 2026, and shall apply beginning with the 2026-2027 school year.

**SECTION 4.**

All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.