

Senate Bill 479

By: Senators Kemp of the 38th, Mangham of the 55th, Howard of the 35th, Wicks of the 34th, Jones II of the 22nd and others

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 one excused
5 absence 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 repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

9 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

10 SECTION 1.

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

14 "20-2-692.5.

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

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

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

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

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

29 **SECTION 2.**

30 This Act shall become effective on July 1, 2026, and shall apply beginning with the
31 2026-2027 school year.

32 **SECTION 3.**

33 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.