SPONSOR: Rep. Morrison & Rep. Dorsey Walker & Rep. S. Moore & Sen. Sturgeon
Reps. Baumbach, Bennett, Bentz, Brady, Briggs King, K. Johnson, Kowalko, Lambert, Longhurst, Lynn, Minor-Brown, Osienski, Ramone, Michael Smith, K. Williams, Wilson-Anton; Sens. Hansen, Lockman, S. McBride, Paradee, Pinkney, Walsh

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
151st GENERAL ASSEMBLY

HOUSE BILL NO. 175
AS AMENDED BY
HOUSE AMENDMENT NO. 2

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 14 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.

WHEREAS, not everything about civics and politics can be learned in a classroom; and

WHEREAS, attending civic engagement activities gives young people “real world” experience regarding politics and society; and

WHEREAS, attending civic engagement activities makes young people feel that they have a voice in the political process; and

WHEREAS, we should encourage young people to be knowledgeable about and active in the political process and in their communities; and

WHEREAS, attending civic engagement activities encourages young people to be engaged in the political process and their communities as adults; and

WHEREAS, many students are already active in their communities and care deeply about social, political, and legislative issues, and deserve opportunities to be as active as possible.

NOW, THEREFORE:

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE:

Section 1. Amend Chapter 27, Title 14 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by strike through and insertions as shown by underline as follows:

§ 2702. Compulsory attendance requirements; evaluation of readiness; exit interview.

(h) Every student who is enrolled in a public school of this State in grades 6 through 12 shall be allowed one excused absence per school year to attend a civic engagement activity, which includes visiting Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. or Legislative Hall in Dover, visiting a site of significant historical or cultural importance, advocating for or testifying on behalf of legislation, or participating in a rally, march, or protest.

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(1) “One excused absence” is defined as one partial or full school day. Students may not take more than one excused partial day and combine them to consider them to be “one excused absence”.

(2) For any civic engagement event that occurs on a day when the student’s school is not in session, the student may not redeem or exchange this non-school day for an excused absence on a school day.

(3) For a student to attend a civic engagement event, the student’s parent or guardian must provide written permission to the school principal or designee no later than 3 school days prior to the student’s planned absence. It is incumbent upon each school to determine what is acceptable as written permission, either a letter or email from the parent or guardian, or a form designed by the school or school district.

(4) The Delaware Department of Education is not responsible for monitoring, tracking, or gathering any information or data regarding students’ excused absences to participate in civic engagement activities.

~~(h)~~ (i) A child over the age of 16 may withdraw from public school prior to graduation if both of the following circumstances exist:

Section 2. This Act takes effect on January 1, 2022.

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