
THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 1763
Author: Lee (D), et al.
Introduced: 2/9/26
Vote: 21

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE: 7-0, 6/17/26

AYES: Pérez, Ochoa Bogh, Cabaldon, Choi, Cortese, Gonzalez, Reyes

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 6-0, 8/13/26

AYES: Cervantes, Seyarto, Cabaldon, Dahle, Grayson, Richardson

NO VOTE RECORDED: Wahab

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 73-0, 5/21/26 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: Pupil attendance: excused absences: religious observance

SOURCE: Jewish California

DIGEST: This bill requires that a student be excused from school when the absence is for the observance of a holiday or ceremony of the pupil's religion by removing the existing requirement that the student's absence be requested in writing by a parent and approved by the principal.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Requires a student between the ages of 6 through 18 to attend school full-time, in the school district where either parent or legal guardian resides, except as specified. (Education Code (EC) § 48200)
- 2) Clarifies that excused absences are deemed to be absences in computing average daily attendance (ADA) and shall not generate state apportionment payments. (EC § 48205)
- 3) Requires that a student be excused from school when the absence is:

- a) For justifiable personal reasons, including, but not limited to, an attendance or appearance in court, attendance at a funeral service, observance of a holiday or ceremony of the pupil's religion, attendance at a religious retreat, attendance at an employment conference, or attendance at an educational conference on the legislative or judicial process offered by a nonprofit organization, when the pupil's absence is requested in writing by the parent or guardian and approved by the principal or a designated representative pursuant to uniform standards established by the governing board of the school district;
- b) For the purpose of serving as a member of a precinct board for an election;
- c) For the purpose of spending time with a member of the student's immediate family who is an active duty member of the uniformed services, and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from, deployment to a combat zone or combat support position;
- d) For purposes of attending the pupil's naturalization ceremony to become a United States citizen;
- e) For purposes of participating in a cultural ceremony or event;
- f) For the purpose of a middle or high school student engaging in a civic or political event for no more than one schoolday per year, provided that the student notifies the school ahead of the absence;
- g) Due to the pupil's participation in military entrance processing;
- h) For any of the following purposes, if an immediate family member of the student, or a person that is determined by the student's parent or guardian to be in such close association with the student as to be considered the student's immediate family, has died, so long as the absence is not more than three days per incident;
 - i) To access services from a victim services organization or agency;
 - ii) To access grief support services; a
 - iii) To participate in safety planning or to take other actions to increase the safety of the student or an immediate family member of the student, or a person that is determined by the student's parent or guardian to be in such close association with the student as to be considered the student's

immediate family, including, but not limited to, temporary or permanent relocation; and

- iv) Authorized at the discretion of a school administrator. (EC § 48205)
- 4) Specifies that absences beyond three days for the reasons described in h) above are subject to the discretion of the school administrator or their designee. (EC § 48205)
- 5) Provides that a valid excuse may include other reasons that are within the discretion of school administrators and based on the facts of the pupil's circumstances. (EC § 48260)
- 6) Clarifies each person between the ages of 6 through 18 years is subject to compulsory full-time education, and each person subject to compulsory continuation education must attend the public full-time day school or continuation school or classes and for the full time designated as the length of the schoolday by the governing board of the school district where the parent or guardian is located. (EC § 48200)
- 7) Authorizes a principal or teacher to require a satisfactory explanation from the parent or guardian of a pupil, either in person or by written note, whenever the pupil is absent a part of or all of a school day. Prohibits that requirement from being imposed until the following day. (California Code of Regulations. Title 5, § 306)

This bill requires that a student be excused from school when the absence is for the observance of a holiday or ceremony of the pupil's religion, rather than requiring that the student's absence be requested in writing by a parent and approved by the principal.

Comments

- 1) *Need for the bill.* According to the author, "California is home to the most diverse population in the nation and became the first to become a "minority-majority" state in 2000. With a broad and diverse range of religious traditions and faiths, our state's schools should better accommodate excused absences for religious reasons. AB 1763 recognizes the State's rich diversity by providing students the academic credit protections for absences for religious observances of holidays and ceremonies, without being subject to different requirements than other excused absences."

- 2) *Excused absences do not generate ADA.* In California, school funding is primarily calculated using ADA. Each time a student is absent, that absence negatively impacts that local educational agency's (LEA's) ADA, ultimately reducing their overall funding. While each absence may be insignificant relative to overall funding levels, in the aggregate, absences impact overall funding. Under current law, all absences, whether excused or unexcused, reduce overall ADA.

Students can currently have an absence excused for the observance of a religious holiday or ceremony of the pupil's religion; however, this bill seeks to reduce the potential burdens of getting the excusal by removing the statutory requirement for those absences to be first requested by a parent or guardian and then approved by a principal or designated representative.

If a school notes that a student is absent and has not received an indication from the student or parent that the absence was for the observance of a religious holiday or ceremony, per regulation, a principal or teacher may require a satisfactory explanation from the parent or guardian of a pupil, either in person or by written note. The explanation shall not be required until the following day.

- 3) *Unexcused Absences Trigger Truancy Provisions.* While excused and unexcused absences may be treated the same for funding purposes, they are not treated the same for attendance purposes. A student absent from school without a valid excuse on any day or tardy for more than 30 minutes, or any combination thereof, for three days in a school year is considered a truant. After a student has been reported as a truant three or more times in one school year and after an appropriate school employee has made a conscientious effort to hold at least one meeting with the parent and the student, the student is deemed a habitual truant. When it has been determined to be a habitual truant, the student may be referred to a school attendance review board or to the county probation department. These interventions are designed to divert students with serious attendance and behavioral problems from the juvenile justice system and to reduce the number of students who drop out of school.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: Yes

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee:

- To the extent there are students who do not attend school as a result of this measure, it could result in additional, unknown Proposition 98 General Fund savings. However, each time a student is absent, that absence negatively

impacts the average daily attendance (ADA) of the local educational agency (LEA). While each individual absence may be insignificant, in the aggregate, the absences reduce the overall amount of funding that LEAs receive from the state.

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/13/26)

Jewish California (source)

30 Years After

Adat Shalom Los Angeles

ADL

Agudath Israel of California

AJC - Los Angeles

AJC - San Diego

AJC Northern California

Bay Area Center to Counter Antisemitism

Bay Area Jewish Coalition Education & Advocacy

Beverly Hills Synagogue

Board of Rabbis of Southern California

California Catholic Conference

California Jewish Democrats

California Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

Chai Marin

Church State Council

Contra Costa Jewish Democrats

Democrats for Israel Los Angeles

Hadassah, the Women's Zionist of America

Hillel of San Diego

Holocaust Museum LA

Informed Policy Advocates

Intercultural Networks Group

JCAN

JCC/Federation of San Luis Obispo

JCRC Bay Area

JCRC Santa Barbara County

JCRC, Jewish Long Beach

Jewish Center for Justice

Jewish Coalition of Berkeley

Jewish Community Relations Council of Sacramento

Jewish Council for Public Affairs

Jewish Democratic Club of Marin

Jewish Democratic Coalition of the Bay Area
Jewish Family and Children's Services of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties
Jewish Family Service LA
Jewish Family Service of San Diego
Jewish Family Service of the Desert
Jewish Family Services of Silicon Valley
Jewish Federation Bay Area
Jewish Federation Los Angeles
Jewish Federation of Greater Santa Barbara
Jewish Federation of Orange County
Jewish Federation of San Diego
Jewish Federation of the Desert
Jewish Federation of the Greater San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys
Jewish Federation of the Sacramento Region
Jewish Federation of Ventura County
Jewish Free Loan Association
Jewish Partisan Educational Foundation
Jewish Silicon Valley
JFCS East Bay
JFCS Long Beach and Orange County
National Council of Jewish Women -SF
Northern California Jewish Labor Committee
Oakland Jewish Alliance
Palo Alto Jewish Alliance
Progressive Zionists of California
SF Jews in School
Simon Wiesenthal Center
StandWithUs
The Jewish Coalition of Berkeley
Valley Beth Shalom
Two Individuals

OPPOSITION: (Verified 8/13/26)

None received

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 73-0, 5/21/26

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong,

Gabriel, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Johnson, Kalra, Krell, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ransom, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas
NO VOTE RECORDED: Arambula, Chen, Gallagher, Garcia, Lackey, Ramos, Celeste Rodriguez

Prepared by: Therresa Austin / ED. / (916) 651-4105
8/14/26 15:57:52

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