

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2019

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HOUSE BILL 151

Short Title: Katelyn's Law. (Public)

Sponsors: Representative Lambeth.

For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

Referred to: Education - K-12, if favorable, State and Local Government, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

February 25, 2019

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO ADOPT RULES EXCUSING ABSENCES FOR STUDENTS ATTENDING A LEGISLATIVE EVENT AND ENSURING THAT CERTAIN EXCUSED ABSENCES DO NOT AFFECT A STUDENT'S PARTICIPATION IN AN APPROVED ATTENDANCE RECOGNITION PROGRAM.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. This act shall be known as "Katelyn's Law" and may be cited by that name.

SECTION 2. G.S. 115C-379 reads as rewritten:

"§ 115C-379. **Method of enforcement.**

(a) Definitions. – As used in this section, the following definitions apply:

(1) Legislative event. – An event sanctioned by at least one chamber of the North Carolina General Assembly that a student attends for an educational, civic, or familial purpose, including, but not limited to, (i) service as a legislative page, (ii) attendance at the legislative swearing-in ceremony of a parent or grandparent, and (iii) attendance at an event in which the student's relative is receiving special recognition by the General Assembly.

(2) Parent. – A parent, guardian, or legal custodian of a student.

(3) Relative. – An individual who is related to a student within the third degree of kinship, including relation by legal adoption.

(4) Religious observance. – A procedure, ceremony, custom, activity, or rite required by the faith of a student or a student's parent.

(b) Rules. – It shall be the duty of the State Board of Education to formulate the rules that may be necessary for the proper enforcement of the provisions of this Part. The Board shall prescribe (i) what shall constitute unlawful absence, (ii) what causes may constitute legitimate excuses for temporary nonattendance due to a student's physical or mental inability to attend or a student's participation in a valid educational opportunity such as a legislative event or service as a legislative page or a Governor's page, and (iii) under what circumstances teachers, principals, or superintendents may excuse pupils for nonattendance due to immediate demands of the farm or the home in certain seasons of the year in the several sections of the State.

(c) Excused Absences. – The rules shall require school principals to authorize excused absences as follows:



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1 (1) ~~a~~A minimum of two excused absences each academic year for religious
2 ~~observances required by the faith of a student or the student's~~
3 ~~parents.~~observances.

4 (2) Whenever a student is unable to attend class because of a legislative event.

5 The rules may require that the student's parents give the principal written notice of the request
6 for an excused absence a reasonable time prior to the religious ~~observance.~~observance or
7 legislative event. The student shall be given the opportunity to make up any tests or other work
8 missed due to an excused absence for a religious ~~observance.~~observance or legislative event.

9 (d) Duties of School Officials. – It shall be the duty of all school officials to carry out
10 such instructions from the State Board of Education, and any school official failing to carry out
11 such instructions shall be guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor: Provided, that the compulsory
12 attendance law herein prescribed shall not be in force in any local school administrative unit that
13 has a higher compulsory attendance feature than that provided herein."

14 **SECTION 3.** G.S. 115C-382.5 reads as rewritten:

15 "**§ 115C-382.5. Student attendance recognition programs.**

16 Local boards of education are encouraged to adopt a student attendance recognition program
17 within the local school administrative unit to promote student attendance in school and
18 participation in class as an integral part of academic achievement and the learning process. If the
19 local board of education adopts a student attendance recognition program, a student with an
20 absence resulting from service as ~~a legislative page or a Governor's page~~ or because of an excused
21 absence identified in G.S. 115C-379(c) shall be eligible for participation in the program and the
22 student's absence shall not be included as part of the student's record of attendance for the
23 purposes of the program."

24 **SECTION 4.** This act is effective when it becomes law and applies beginning with
25 the 2019-2020 school year.