

HB 1573 - AS INTRODUCED

2026 SESSION

26-2868

12/06

HOUSE BILL **1573**

AN ACT permitting excused absences for students participating in civic engagement or attending a career or technical education event.

SPONSORS: Rep. Thibault, Merr. 25; Rep. Drye, Sull. 7; Rep. Farrington, Straf. 8; Rep. Freeman, Belk. 8; Rep. Harvey-Bolia, Belk. 3; Rep. Litchfield, Rock. 32; Rep. Moffett, Merr. 4; Rep. Wheeler, Hills. 33; Sen. Innis, Dist 7; Sen. Sullivan, Dist 18

COMMITTEE: Education Policy and Administration

ANALYSIS

This bill permits excused absences for students that are participating in civic engagement activities and career or technical education (CTE) activities so long as parental notice is provided to schools and other requirements are met. The bill also directs the state board of education to develop rules and alternative academic credits relative to participation in civic or CTE activities.

Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics***.
Matter removed from current law appears ~~[in brackets and struckthrough.]~~
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty-Six

AN ACT permitting excused absences for students participating in civic engagement or attending a career or technical education event.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 1 New Section; Excused Absences for Civic and Career Technical Education Activities. Amend
2 RSA 193 by inserting after section 1-c the following new section:

3 193:1-d Excused Absences for Civic and Career Technical Education Activities.

4 I. Students in public or public charter primary or secondary schools who wish to attend civic
5 events during the school day shall have their school absences excused.

6 II. For the purposes of this section:

7 (a) A “civic event” shall be defined as any event, activity, hearing, or meeting held by
8 federal, state, or local government bodies, community-based organizations, or non-profit
9 organizations relating to a civic or political issue.

10 (b) A “career or technical education event,” or “CTE event,” shall be defined as any event
11 or activity relating to a career or technical education curriculum or student organization, such as 4-
12 H, Future Farmers of America (FFA), Future Business Leaders of America, SkillsUSA, Health
13 Occupations Students of America (HOSA), or DECA.

14 III. Schools shall be required to excuse 2 of a student’s school day absences per 45 school day
15 period for civic or CTE events.

16 (a) This paragraph shall not preclude schools from excusing further absences at their
17 own discretion.

18 (b) Students 18 years old or older who wish to vote in an election shall be granted an
19 excused tardy or early dismissal to do so, unless the school is already closed on said day for the
20 purposes of an election. The moderator or designee shall provide students with a signed form
21 confirming that they have voted at a certain time after they have cast their ballot to return to the
22 school for verification of the excusal. Such excusals shall not count toward a student’s minimum
23 excused absences under this paragraph.

24 (c) Participation in activities related to statutory or executive New Hampshire youth
25 advisory councils, either as a member or a guest, shall supersede this paragraph and shall always be
26 excused.

27 (d) Students attending multi-day conferences for career and technical student
28 organizations or civic leadership may have absences for such conferences excused with proof of
29 attendance.

1 IV. Schools may require students provide evidence of attendance of the activity they claim
2 participation in to verify the justification of the absence. Such evidence may include:

3 (a) A form created by the school and signed by an official of the activity, such as a New
4 Hampshire house or senate committee clerk or other government staffer, or event official; or

5 (b) A letter of excusal signed by a government or CTE event official.

6 V. In addition to the requirements outlined in paragraph III, parents shall submit a notice
7 to school administrators no less than two school days before their student intends to be absent to
8 attend a civic or CTE event, with the exception of election days.

9 2 New Paragraph; Duties of the State Board of Education. Amend RSA 186:11 by inserting
10 after paragraph XXXVII the following new paragraph:

11 XXXVIII. Civic and Career Technical Education. The state board of education shall develop
12 and maintain rules pursuant to RSA 193:1-d civic and CTE events, such as testifying on legislation;
13 serving on membership on statutory or executive New Hampshire youth advisory councils; and
14 attending local government meetings or hearings, to count as alternative academic credit in public,
15 public charter, and private secondary schools that serve as public schools under RSA 193:3, VII,
16 including fulfillment of the civic education graduation requirement.

17 3 Effective Date. This act shall take effect upon its passage.