



January 12, 2026

Rep. Kristin Noble  
Chair, House Education Policy and Administration Committee

**Re: Testimony in Opposition to HB 1573**

Dear Madame Chair and Honorable members of the House Education Policy and Administration Committee,

While we applaud the intent of strengthening civics education in our public schools, I am writing to express our opposition to the current version of HB 1573. The bill as written would impose a requirement on schools to excuse potentially up to eight days of absences without a coordinated plan established with the school or a student's teacher. There are several issues we see here.

The definition of "civic event" in the bill as introduced is "any event, activity, hearing, or meeting held by federal, state, or local government bodies, community-based organizations, or non-profit organizations relating to a civic or political issue". This is far too broad of a definition, especially considering it is being proposed as a state mandate with no proposed method of scrutiny as to the academic value of such an event.

- 1) "*Any* event, activity, hearing or meeting" without any approval process from the school or a more narrow definition is concerning. With a limited number of school days for a teacher and students during the school year, without strong required guidelines or approval process authority given to the school this heightens the risk for absenteeism without a net education value.
- 2) "*Any* community based organization or non-profit relating to civic or political issue" is also concerning in how broadly it is written. There are thousands of community-based organizations and non-profit organizations that could relate to civic or political issues, however not all of them would be appropriate for a student to attend, especially when supplanting a school day.

- 3) Allowing the state board to adopt rules relative to this proposed law does not solve our underlying concern without ensuring that the teacher and the school have a more meaningful role in verifying that the broadly defined civic event is valuable to the extent it should be granted school credit.

Chronic absenteeism is a serious issue with many students in our state and without the proper tools for a teacher or the school to regulate the absentee excusal, we worry that this bill does not do enough ensure academic civic value for our students.

We urge this committee to look further at this issue and the ways in which the state can support educators in ensuring that civics education experience outside the classroom is a part of student education. However, HB 1573 would require a very different approach and therefore ask the committee to find the bill Inexpedient to Legislate.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,



Megan Tuttle  
President  
NEA-NH