

HOUSE BILL 2818

By Hale

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49,
relative to school attendance.

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

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-6-3005, is amended by adding the following as a new subsection:

(e)

(1) A student enrolled in a public school in any of the grades nine through twelve (9-12) must be temporarily excused from school attendance for up to one (1) school day per school year, in order for students to be given the opportunity to:

(A) Visit a site of significant civic or historical importance;

(B) Attend a meeting of a local or state legislative body of this state; or

(C) Participate in a civic engagement activity.

(2) A student's parent or guardian must provide written permission to the principal or principal's designee authorizing the student to be absent from school as authorized under this subsection (e) no later than one (1) school day prior to the student's absence. If a student has reached eighteen (18) years of age, then the student must comply with the requirements of subdivision (e)(3) in order to be excused from school attendance. Each school, in its discretion, shall determine what constitutes acceptable written permission for the purposes of excusing a student from school attendance as provided in this subsection (e).

(3) Following a student's return to school from a place or activity under (e)(1)(A)-(C), the school must require the student to complete and submit a one (1) page summary explaining what the student personally gained from the civic engagement activity. The assignment must be submitted to the students social studies or government teacher, or the student's teacher in a comparable subject, within two (2) school days following the student's absence. Additional assignment requirements, if any, shall be decided upon by each school's administration.

(4) The department of education shall not be responsible for monitoring, tracking, or gathering information pertaining to the absences of students taken to participate in a civic engagement activity, as provided in this subsection (e).

SECTION 2. This act takes effect January 1, 2025, the public welfare requiring it.