

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2019

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HOUSE BILL 151  
Committee Substitute Favorable 3/5/19

Short Title: Katelyn's Law.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

February 25, 2019

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

7 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

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

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

11 "**§ 115C-379. Method of enforcement.**

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

20 (b) Excused Absences. – The rules shall at least require school principals to authorize  
21 excused absences as follows:

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

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

31 (3) Service as a Governor's page.

32 (c) Advance Notice and Missed Work. – The rules may require that the student's parents  
33 give the principal written notice of the request for an excused absence a reasonable time prior to  
34 the religious observance. The student shall be given the opportunity to make up any  
35 tests or other work missed due to an excused absence for a religious observance.



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

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

7 "**§ 115C-382.5. Student attendance recognition programs.**

8 Local boards of education are encouraged to adopt a student attendance recognition program  
9 within the local school administrative unit to promote student attendance in school and  
10 participation in class as an integral part of academic achievement and the learning process. If the  
11 local board of education adopts a student attendance recognition program, a student with an  
12 absence resulting from service as a ~~legislative page~~ or a Governor's page or because of an excused  
13 absence identified in G.S. 115C-379(b)(2) shall be eligible for participation in the program and  
14 the student's absence shall not be included as part of the student's record of attendance for the  
15 purposes of the program."

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