

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 1152
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Veteran Affairs & Border Security
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Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

S.B. 1152 allows a district to excuse a student who is 17 years of age or older for up to four days for the entirety of their high school career from attending school to pursue enlistment in a branch of the armed services of the United States or the Texas National Guard. These excused days can be used to complete tests, medical readiness, legal appointments, or career counseling. The district is also expected to verify the student's absence.

Section 25.087, Education Code, allows for students to be excused from school for certain purposes. While high school students are allowed two days junior year and two days senior year to visit an institution of higher education, students planning to join a United States military branch or the Texas National Guard are not supported under the current Texas Education Code.

According to the different recruiters of the U.S. military, the maximum number of days needed to complete tests, medical readiness, legal appointments, and career counseling in order to enlist in the military for a high school student is four days. The student is penalized for any absence(s) for required appointments and visits. The absences do not count towards a day of compulsory attendance and school districts are unable to count absences related to this process towards their calculation of the average daily attendance. (Original Author's / Sponsor's Statement of Intent)

S.B. 1152 amends current law relating to excused absences from public school for the purpose of pursuing enlistment in a branch of the armed services of the United States or the Texas National Guard.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 25.087, Education Code, by adding Subsections (b-5) and (b-6) and amending Subsection (d), as follows:

(b-5) Requires a school district to excuse a student who is 17 years of age or older from attending school to pursue enlistment in a branch of the armed services of the United States or the Texas National Guard (TNG), provided that the district may not excuse for this purpose more than four days of school during the period the student is enrolled in high school and the district verifies the student's activities related to pursuing enlistment in a branch of the armed services or TNG.

(b-6) Requires each school district to adopt procedures to verify a student's activities as described by Subsection (b-5).

(d) Prohibits a student whose absence is excused under Subsection (b-5), among other subsections, from being penalized for that absence and requires that the student be counted as if the student attended school for purposes of calculating the average daily attendance of students in the school district. Makes a conforming change.

SECTION 2. Provides that this Act applies beginning with the 2017-2018 school year.

SECTION 3. Requires each school district, not later than October 1, 2017, to adopt a policy for verification of student activities relating to pursuing military enlistment as required by Section 25.087(b-6), Education Code, as added by this Act.

SECTION 4. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2017.