

1-1 By: King S.B. No. 1049
1-2 (In the Senate - Filed February 3, 2025; February 24, 2025,
1-3 read first time and referred to Committee on Education K-16;
1-4 April 28, 2025, reported adversely, with favorable Committee
1-5 Substitute by the following vote: Yeas 10, Nays 0; April 28, 2025,
1-6 sent to printer.)

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|------|--------------------|-----|-----|--------|
| 1-7 | COMMITTEE VOTE | | | |
| 1-8 | | Yea | Nay | Absent |
| 1-9 | Creighton | X | | PNV |
| 1-10 | Campbell | X | | |
| 1-11 | Bettencourt | | | X |
| 1-12 | Hagenbuch | X | | |
| 1-13 | Hinojosa of Nueces | X | | |
| 1-14 | King | X | | |
| 1-15 | Menéndez | X | | |
| 1-16 | Middleton | X | | |
| 1-17 | Parker | X | | |
| 1-18 | Paxton | X | | |
| 1-19 | West | X | | |

1-20 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR S.B. No. 1049 By: Hagenbuch

1-21 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
1-22 AN ACT

1-23 relating to excused absences from public school for the purpose of
1-24 attending a released time course.
1-25 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:
1-26 SECTION 1. Section 25.087(b), Education Code, is amended to
1-27 read as follows:
1-28 (b) A school district shall excuse a student from attending
1-29 school for:
1-30 (1) the following purposes, including travel for those
1-31 purposes:
1-32 (A) observing religious holy days;
1-33 (B) attending a required court appearance;
1-34 (C) appearing at a governmental office to
1-35 complete paperwork required in connection with the student's
1-36 application for United States citizenship;
1-37 (D) taking part in a United States naturalization
1-38 oath ceremony;
1-39 (E) serving as an election clerk; ~~[or]~~
1-40 (F) if the student is in the conservatorship of
1-41 the Department of Family and Protective Services, participating, as
1-42 determined and documented by the department, in an activity:
1-43 (i) ordered by a court under Chapter 262 or
1-44 263, Family Code, provided that it is not practicable to schedule
1-45 the participation outside of school hours; or
1-46 (ii) required under a service plan under
1-47 Subchapter B, Chapter 263, Family Code; or
1-48 (G) attending a course under Section 25.0875;
1-49 (2) a temporary absence resulting from an appointment
1-50 with health care professionals for the student or the student's
1-51 child if the student commences classes or returns to school on the
1-52 same day of the appointment; or
1-53 (3) an absence resulting from a serious or
1-54 life-threatening illness or related treatment that makes the
1-55 student's attendance infeasible, if the student or the student's
1-56 parent or guardian provides a certification from a physician
1-57 licensed to practice medicine in this state specifying the
1-58 student's illness and the anticipated period of the student's
1-59 absence relating to the illness or related treatment.
1-60 SECTION 2. Subchapter C, Chapter 25, Education Code, is

amended by adding Section 25.0875 to read as follows:

Sec. 25.0875. EXCUSED ABSENCE TO ATTEND RELEASED TIME COURSE. (a) In this section, "released time course" means a course in religious instruction offered by a private entity.

(b) A school district or open-enrollment charter school shall, on the request of a parent or legal guardian of a student enrolled at the district or school and subject to the policy adopted under Subsection (c), excuse the student from attending school to attend a released time course for at least one but not more than five hours a week.

(c) Each school district and open-enrollment charter school shall adopt a policy for excusing a student enrolled at the district or school from attending school to attend a released time course. The policy:

(1) must require:

(A) the student's parent or legal guardian to provide written consent for the student to attend the released time course;

(B) the private entity offering the released time course to maintain attendance records and make the records available to the district or school at which the student is enrolled;

(C) the private entity, parent or legal guardian, or student to assume responsibility for transportation, including transportation for a student with a disability, to and from any location at which the released time course is offered;

(D) the private entity to make provisions for and assume liability for the student enrolled in the released time course while the student is under the private entity's care; and

(E) the student to assume responsibility for any schoolwork issued during the student's absence;

(2) must prohibit:

(A) the district or school from using district or school funds, excluding de minimis costs, to facilitate the provision of a released time course; and

(B) the private entity from offering the released time course on district or school property, unless permitted under a neutral policy of equal access that allows community organizations to use district or school property; and

(3) may not interfere with the ability of the student's parent or legal guardian to request or access a released time course for the student.

SECTION 3. Not later than January 1, 2026, each school district and open-enrollment charter school shall adopt the excused absence policy required by Section 25.0875, Education Code, as added by this Act.

SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.

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