

2024 Regular Session

SENATE BILL NO. 327

BY SENATOR BARROW

SCHOOLS. Provides for mandatory mental health days for high school students under certain circumstances. (gov sig)

1 AN ACT

2 To enact R.S. 17:226(C), relative to exemption from school attendance; to provide for

3 excused absences under certain circumstances; to provide for proof related to the

4 absences; to provide for an effective date; and to provide for related matters.

5 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

6 Section 1. R.S. 17:226(C) is hereby enacted to read as follows:

7 §226. Exemptions from compulsory attendance

8 * * *

9 C. Children who are mentally stressed and may be suffering from

10 anxiety and whose attendance in school may endanger their academic

11 performance shall be allowed to be absent from school for not more than two

12 days per semester. Upon the child's return to school, the parent must provide

13 the school with the recommendation of a medical doctor or mental health

14 professional without judgment or stigma. Any school work the child misses due

15 to the mental health absence shall be made up before the semester ends.

16 Section 2. The provisions of this Act shall be known and cited as the "Tonja Richard

17 Law".

1 Section 3. This Act shall become effective upon signature by the governor or, if not
 2 signed by the governor, upon expiration of the time for bills to become law without signature
 3 by the governor, as provided by Article III, Section 18 of the Constitution of Louisiana. If
 4 vetoed by the governor and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become
 5 effective on the day following such approval.

The original instrument was prepared by Michael Bell. The following digest, which does not constitute a part of the legislative instrument, was prepared by Mary Francis Aucoin.

DIGEST

SB 327 Engrossed

2024 Regular Session

Barrow

Present law provides that certain children must be exempted from provisions of state law relative to school attendance, including but not limited to children temporarily excused from school for specified reasons.

Proposed law retains present law and provides additionally that children who are mentally stressed and may be suffering from anxiety and whose attendance in school may endanger their academic performance must be allowed to be absent from school for not more than two days per semester.

Proposed law provides that upon the child's return to school, the parent must provide the school with the recommendation of a medical doctor or mental health professional without judgment or stigma; any school work the child misses due to the mental health absence must be made up before the semester ends.

Proposed law provides that this Act shall be known as the "Tonja Richard Law".

Effective upon signature of the governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Adds R.S. 17:226(C))

Summary of Amendments Adopted by Senate

Committee Amendments Proposed by Senate Committee on Education to the original bill

1. Changes "with" to "without" judgement or stigma.