



**House
Legislative
Analysis
Section**

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75 PERCENT ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENT

**House Bill 4322 (Substitute H-1)
First Analysis (4-10-03)**

**Sponsor: Rep. Ruth Johnson
Committee: Education**

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

During the past 10 years, the Ms. Foundation for Women has sponsored "Take Your Daughters to Work Day," on the fourth Thursday of April. The purpose of that special day was to introduce girls to the many career opportunities available in their future, with a special emphasis on non-traditional jobs—those long closed to women because of institutional sexism and racism. Now that women make up 46 percent of the U.S. work force, girls can find role models in every occupational field—from politics, to positions on university faculties, to upper level management positions, to professional athletics. Many occupations previously "off limits" are now open and women are able to compete alongside of men, as both work to make the world—and the world of work—a better place. However, women continue to receive on average only 73 cents for every dollar that men are paid, and they remain vastly underrepresented in top executive positions, and technology fields.

Beginning this year, the Ms. Foundation will launch a new program to replace "Take Your Daughters to Work." This program is called "Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work," and the first annual event is scheduled for Thursday, April 24, 2003. The foundation has shifted its approach because for girls to be able to achieve their full potential—whether in their homes, workplaces, or communities—boys also must be encouraged to reach their potential by participating fully in family, work, and community. See *BACKGROUND INFORMATION* below.

The Ms. Foundation has purposefully scheduled their annual workplace visits on Thursday, a school-day during the work-week, in an effort to expand the walls of school classrooms to include interesting lessons and learning located within the community. In that way, learning extends beyond the classroom, and education becomes far more than schooling. The expectation is that venturing out to the workplace provides practical applications of the students' studies in math, English, science, and social studies,

and the foundation encourages teachers to incorporate the theme and purpose of the workplace visit into their school-based curricular units, both before and after the students participate.

Many schools offer the students who participate in this annual event an 'excused absence' for the day. However, the event has grown so popular, that some schools find their student membership dropping below the daily 75 percent mark—the standard that must be met in order to be eligible for a full day's state aid.

To ensure that a school is not financially penalized when more than 25 percent of its students participate in the annual "Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day," legislation has been introduced.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

Currently under the State School Aid Act, a school district must offer at least 180 days of instruction each year, and on each of those days at least 75 percent of the district's students must be in attendance. If a district does not have at least 75 percent of its membership in attendance, it does not receive state aid in that proportion of 1/180 that the actual percent of attendance bears to the specified percentage. House Bill 4322 would amend the act to exempt the nationally recognized day to take daughters and sons to work from the 75 percent attendance the requirement.

MCL 388.1701

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Ms. Foundation for Women has worked with the Families and Work Institute (funded by J. P. Morgan Chase and Co. and Open Society Institute) to ask youngsters about their future. In their survey "Youth and Employment: Today's Students, Tomorrow's

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Workforce,” they report that 90 percent of students who say they plan to have a job, also plan to have children. What’s more, 81 percent of the girls and almost 60 percent of the boys said they will reduce their work hours when they have children. Meanwhile, many working adults know that mixing family and work-life can be terribly demanding. Adults often report that the unspoken rules of the workplace assume that work is not the top priority for those workers who leave to attend parent-teacher conferences, care for sick children, volunteer at school, coach academic or athletic teams, or journey to family reunions.

Because many working adults want to be more involved in their families’ lives, but fear care-giving responsibilities limit their job possibilities and advancement at work, the Ms. Foundation and the Families and Work Institute have designed interactive workplace activities to encourage girls and boys to think now about how their dreams—both for their work and family lives—can be achieved. By creating an opportunity for girls and boys to share their expectations for the future in the context of seeing new work opportunities, they hope to begin a conversation about the changes girls and boys hope for.

For more information about “Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day,” visit <http://www.daughtersandsonstowork.org>.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

The House Fiscal Agency notes that this bill would have no fiscal impact. (4-8-03)

ARGUMENTS:

For:

Schools should not suffer a financial aid penalty because more than 25 percent of their students take part in the annual event, “Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day.” It is important that school-age youngsters have the opportunity to see their parents and other adults at work, in order to better imagine their futures. They can learn that finding successful ways to balance family and work-life can be a daunting challenge for adults. This event allows adults to explore possible strategies with their children, and it enables children to begin thinking early about achieving balance in their careers. This kind of learning in community—what educators call ‘acquired learning,’ in contrast to ‘intended learning’—is crucial for successful growth and

development. ‘Acquired learning’ generally happens outside of schools and classrooms, and it demonstrates the degree to which the education of all competent people—young and old—incorporates, and then extends beyond, their schooling in a process of mutual reinforcement. Both kinds of learning are necessary in order that adults and children enrich their lives and those of others in the community, and cross-generational activities are good ways to ensure that enrichment.

POSITIONS:

The Michigan Education Association supports the bill. (4-9-03)

Analyst: J. Hunault

■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.