



Senate Fiscal Agency  
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**BILL ANALYSIS**

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Senate Bill 747 (as reported without amendment)  
Sponsor: Senator Valde Garcia  
Committee: Senior Citizens and Veterans Affairs

*(as passed by the Senate)*

Date Completed: 10-16-07

**RATIONALE**

When a military outfit, including a National Guard or Reserve unit, is deployed on active duty or returns from deployment, there often is a farewell or welcome-home ceremony that includes the families of the departing or returning troops. Reportedly, some families have had difficulty bringing children to these ceremonies because some schools have refused to grant an excused absence to a student for this purpose. It has been suggested that schools should be required to excuse a pupil's absence for a parent's deployment or return from active duty.

**CONTENT**

The bill would amend the Revised School Code to require school officials to consider a pupil's absence as an excused absence if the pupil were absent from school for up to one full school day because his or her parent or legal guardian was a service member being deployed on or returning from active duty. The bill would not prohibit a public school from considering such an absence that was longer than one full day to be an excused absence.

The board of a school district or intermediate school district or board of directors of a public school academy would have to ensure that its attendance policy was consistent with the bill.

"Service member" would mean a member of the armed forces, a reserve branch of the armed forces, or the Michigan National Guard (the Army National Guard or the Air National Guard). "Armed forces" would mean that term as defined in the Veteran

Right to Employment Services Act (MCL 35.1092), i.e., the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, or other military force designated by Congress as part of the U.S. Armed Forces. "Active duty" would mean active duty pursuant to an Executive Order of the President of the United States, an act of Congress, or an order of the Governor.

Proposed MCL 380.1138

**ARGUMENTS**

*(Please note: The arguments contained in this analysis originate from sources outside the Senate Fiscal Agency. The Senate Fiscal Agency neither supports nor opposes legislation.)*

**Supporting Argument**

When a student's parent or guardian is deployed for active military duty, or returns from that assignment, the student should be allowed to join his or her family for the departure or return ceremony. If attending such an event conflicts with school hours, the child should not be punished with an unexcused absence. By requiring schools to excuse a student's absence due to a parent's or guardian's deployment for or return from active duty, the bill would allow students to participate in send-off or homecoming events, or simply spend time with the person who is leaving or coming home, without being overly concerned about missing a day of school. In addition, excusing the student's absence would recognize the sacrifice not only of Michigan's military personnel but also of their families.

Legislative Analyst: Patrick Affholter

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

Fiscal Analyst: Kathryn Summers-Coty

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.