

State of Arkansas  
95th General Assembly  
Regular Session, 2025

# A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1986

By: Representative Nazarenko

By: Senator D. Wallace

## For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT CONCERNING EXCUSED ABSENCES FOR CHILDREN OF  
FALLEN SERVICE MEMBERS AND CHILDREN OF FALLEN FIRST  
RESPONDERS; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

### Subtitle

CONCERNING EXCUSED ABSENCES FOR CHILDREN  
OF FALLEN SERVICE MEMBERS AND CHILDREN  
OF FALLEN FIRST RESPONDERS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 18, Subchapter 2, is amended to add an additional section to read as follows:

6-18-238. Excused absences – Children of fallen service members and children of fallen first responders – Definitions.

(a) A student who meets one (1) of the following qualifications shall not be considered absent from his or her public school for the time during which he or she is absent from school due to a mental health concern or to attend an event from a sponsoring organization that provides support to families of fallen service members or first responders or provides support for traumatic loss, grief, or resiliency:

(1) A student who is a child of a fallen service member; or

(2) A student who is a child of a fallen first responder.

(b) As used in this section:

(1) "Child" means a biological or adopted son, daughter, stepson, or stepdaughter;

(2) "First responder" means a firefighter, law enforcement



officer, or person employed as an emergency medical provider; and

(3) "Public school" means:

(A) A public school within a public school district; or

(B) An open-enrollment public charter school.

(c)(1) In order for a student to receive an excused absence under this section, the student's parent, legal guardian, or person standing in loco parentis to the student shall provide written documentation that the student's absence is to attend an event from a sponsoring organization that provides support to families of fallen service members or first responders or provides support for traumatic loss, grief, or resiliency.

(2) A public school may utilize the Resources Page for Military Family Engagement on the Department of Education website to verify an organization that provides support to the military and first responder community.

(d) A student who receives an excused absence under this section shall:

(1) Be in good academic standing;

(2) Have a prior record of good attendance at his or her school;

and

(3) Complete and turn in any missed classwork within the time period required by the school in which the student is enrolled.

(e) A student shall not be granted an excused absence under this section if the absence occurs during a date on which standardized testing is administered.