A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO EDUCATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that pursuant to section 302A-1140, Hawaii Revised Statutes, the board of education is required to excuse any student absence caused by the observation of a religious holy day. However, the legislature recognizes that students may also miss school due to the observation of other religious practices. Further, while absences for the observation of religious holy days are treated as "excused absences" in certain circumstances, the legislature believes that absences caused by the observation of other religious practices should not be considered absences of any kind, nor should these absences prevent an otherwise eligible student from receiving perfect attendance.

Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to extend the requirement that the board of education release from school attendance students observing holy days to the observation of other religious practices.
SECTION 2. Section 302A-1140, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended to read as follows:

"[§302A-1140] Religious holy days practices. (a) The board shall release any public school student from school attendance for the purpose of observing religious holy days that fall on regularly scheduled school days, when the release is requested in writing by a parent, guardian, or other person having custody or control of the pupil. Actual attendance at observances shall count as an excused absence at the public schools for all purposes where attendance forms the basis of computation.

(b) The board shall release any public school student from school attendance for the purpose of observing a religious practice not otherwise addressed in subsection (a) that occurs during a regularly scheduled school day, when the release is requested in writing by a parent, guardian, or other person having custody or control of the pupil; provided that an absence from school for the purpose of observing a religious practice pursuant to this subsection shall not be deemed an absence of any kind and shall not prohibit any student from achieving perfect attendance."
SECTION 3. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

INTRODUCED BY: [Signature]

JAN 17 2020
Report Title:
BOE; Attendance; Religious Practices

Description:
Extends the requirement that the Board of Education release from school attendance students observing holy days to the observation of other religious practices.

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