



CONTACT

Communications Team, GENUp
EMAIL: info@generationup.net
WEB: generationup.net

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Excused Absences (SB 350) *Press release*

Sacramento, CA, 15 March 2023 — Last month, SB 350 was introduced by Senator Ashby and recently referred to the Senate Education Committee. SB 350 is an important bill which will allow students in California necessary time and space to grieve for the death of a loved one.

Existing law in California allows a student to excused from school for the purpose of attending funeral services of a member of a pupil's immediate family, provided that the absence does not last for more than one day if the service is conducted within California and not more than three days if the service is conducted out of state. This only allows time for the student to attend a funeral service or to physically travel to and from the service.

Around five million U.S. children will experience the death of a parent or sibling before they turn eighteen. Allowing students one day of excused absence does not give enough time for a student to physically or emotionally mourn their loss. Students report grief having a profound impact on school and work. Unaddressed childhood grief and trauma often results in serious mental health concerns, leading to long-term health problems and substance abuse.

SB 350 would instead allow students time to grieve, allowing excusals from school for up to five days to attend funeral services or grieve the death of a family member. This allows students the necessary grace to focus on recovering from grief before returning to their educational institution. This bill would reduce unnecessary burdens on students in California suffering from the loss of a loved one, and remove barriers to the healing process.

In addition, SB 350 would require another type of excused absence for the purpose of obtaining victim services or participating in safety planning for those affected by violence or abuse. Abuse in childhood is correlated with an increased risk of numerous health problems in adulthood, such as heart disease, cancer, substance abuse, and mental illness. Recovering students often need time to receive victim services or participate in safety planning. To ensure students are given this necessary time, extended absences are necessary to fully support the needs of students.

GENup is proud to co-sponsor this bill to protect the mental health and safety of California's students, and GENup looks to the future to continue supporting legislation to protect the rights and needs of our youth.

###