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By: **Senator Colburn**

Introduced and read first time: February 3, 2006

Assigned to: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

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A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2                                   **Education - Student Absence from School to Participate in Agriculture**  
3                                   **Programs or Activities**

4 FOR the purpose of specifying that a student participating in an agriculture program  
5 or activity that is sponsored, conducted, or sanctioned by certain organizations  
6 may not be deemed absent from school or assessed a penalty for the absence;  
7 and generally relating to absence from school by certain students to participate  
8 in certain agriculture programs or activities.

9 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,  
10 Article - Education  
11 Section 7-301(a)  
12 Annotated Code of Maryland  
13 (2004 Replacement Volume and 2005 Supplement)

14 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
15 Article - Education  
16 Section 7-301(b)  
17 Annotated Code of Maryland  
18 (2004 Replacement Volume and 2005 Supplement)

19 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF  
20 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

21                                   **Article - Education**

22 7-301.

23 (a) (1) Except as otherwise provided in this section, each child who resides  
24 in this State and is 5 years old or older and under 16 shall attend a public school  
25 regularly during the entire school year unless the child is otherwise receiving regular,  
26 thorough instruction during the school year in the studies usually taught in the public  
27 schools to children of the same age.

1           (2)       In accordance with regulations of the State Board of Education, a  
2 child who resides in this State and is 5 years old may be exempted from mandatory  
3 school attendance for 1 year if the child's parent or guardian files a written request  
4 with the local school system asking that the child's attendance be delayed due to the  
5 child's level of maturity.

6           (3)       Except as provided in subsection (f) of this section or in regulations of  
7 the State Board of Education, each child who resides in this State shall attend a  
8 kindergarten program regularly during the school year prior to entering the first  
9 grade unless the child is otherwise receiving regular, thorough instruction in the  
10 skills and studies usually taught in a kindergarten program of a public school.

11       (b)       (1)       A county superintendent, school principal, or an individual  
12 authorized by the county superintendent or principal may excuse a student for a  
13 lawful absence.

14           (2)       A STUDENT PARTICIPATING IN AN AGRICULTURE PROGRAM OR  
15 ACTIVITY THAT IS SPONSORED, CONDUCTED, OR SANCTIONED BY THE 4-H CLUB, THE  
16 FUTURE FARMERS OF AMERICA, OR THE MARYLAND FARM BUREAU MAY NOT BE  
17 DEEMED ABSENT FROM SCHOOL OR ASSESSED A PENALTY FOR THE ABSENCE BY  
18 THE STATE BOARD, THE COUNTY BOARD, OR A LOCAL SCHOOL OFFICIAL.

19       SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
20 October 1, 2006.