

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2006 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

Senate Bill 621 (Senator Colburn)  
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

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

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This bill provides that a student may not be deemed absent from school or assessed a penalty for the absence if the student is participating in an agricultural program or activity that is sponsored, conducted, or sanctioned by the 4-H Club, the Future Farmers of America, or the Maryland Farm Bureau.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None.

**Local Effect:** Requiring local school systems to grant excused absences for agricultural activities would not impact local board of education finances.

**Small Business Effect:** Minimal.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** A child age 5 to 15 must attend public school regularly unless the child is otherwise receiving regular, thorough instruction at an alternative setting (*i.e.*, a private or home school). By regulation, a child may be absent from school for a death in the immediate family, illness, a court summons, hazardous weather conditions, work approved or sponsored by the school, observance of a religious holiday, State emergency, suspension, lack of authorized transportation, and other emergency circumstances which constitute good cause. Within these policies, local school systems have some authority to determine what activities constitute excused absences.

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## **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland State Department of Education, Maryland Department of Agriculture, Maryland Higher Education Commission, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 8, 2006  
ncs/rhh

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