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GOVERNOR ABBOTT SIGNS HOUSE BILL 1212 FURTHERING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM FOR STUDENTS IN TEXAS

HOUSTON, TX – House Bill 1212 by Representative Jacey Jetton (R-Fort Bend) and sponsored by Senator Lois Kolkhorst (R-Brenham) was signed into law by Governor Abbott on Thursday, June 1st, 2023.

Supported by Houston’s Minaret Foundation and Christian, Jewish, Hindu, and Sikh faith organizations throughout Texas, HB1212 eliminates the need for families to provide proof of a religious holiday from a faith center for excused absences. HB1212 empowers parents to give permission for their children to miss school for their religious holiday counting as an excused absence.

"Parents are the best guides for their children’s education and walks of faith. As a representative for the most diverse county in America, I was proud to author HB 1212, which empowers parents to give permission for their children to miss up to two school days per year due to religious holidays. We are incredibly grateful for the support this bill received from religious leaders around the state." - Representative Jacey Jetton (R-Fort Bend)

Before this legislation, the process of marking excused absences for religious holidays was left up to the districts, each requiring different types of validation - some even rejecting the proof given to them.

"It was an honor for me to serve as the Senate sponsor for HB 1212, which strives to remove additional burdens on students seeking an excused absence in order to observe a religious holy day. Expanding the opportunities for students to honor and worship their respective faiths is a worthy effort, and I was grateful to be part of passing this important legislation through the Senate and to the Governor." - Senator Lois Kolkhorst (R-Brenham)

"All students deserve to learn in environments that safeguard their right to practice their religion, but the lack of standardization complicates the process. By ensuring parent notes are universally accepted, HB1212 removes a major barrier to student success," said Abigail Levine, Policy Analyst for Minaret Foundation.

More information is available at:

<https://minaretfoundation.com/policies/student-religious-excuse-letter/>

About Minaret Foundation:

Minaret Foundation's mission is to leverage our faith beliefs to change the world around us through multi-faith and civic engagement. We are a Texas-based 501(c)3.

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