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HOUSE BILL NO. 334

INTRODUCED BY L. BISHOP, B. KEENAN, W. SALES, M. THANE

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS OF STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS; ADDING "MEDICALLY DIAGNOSED MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS" TO THE REASONS A CHILD MAY BE ABSENT FROM SCHOOL AND EXCUSED FROM COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE; AMENDING SECTION 20-5-103, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE."

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

**Section 1.** Section 20-5-103, MCA, is amended to read:

**"20-5-103. Compulsory attendance and excuses.** (1) Except as provided in subsection (2), any parent, guardian, or other person who is responsible for the care of any child who is 7 years of age or older prior to the first day of school in any school fiscal year shall cause the child to attend the school in which the child is enrolled for the school term and each school day in the term prescribed by the trustees of the district until the later of the following dates:

- (a) the child's 16th birthday; or
  - (b) the date of completion of the work of the 8th grade.
- (2) The provisions of subsection (1) do not apply in the following cases:
- (a) The child has been excused under one of the conditions specified in 20-5-102.
  - (b) The child is absent because of illness, medically diagnosed mental health needs, bereavement, or other reason prescribed by the policies of the trustees.
  - (c) The child has been suspended or expelled under the provisions of 20-5-202.
  - (d) The child is excused pursuant to 20-7-120."

NEW SECTION. **Section 2. Effective date.** [This act] is effective on passage and approval.

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