



Bill Number:	S-20-03	Sponsored By:	Senator Nicholas Raak
Introduced On:	3 September 2020		
Voted On:	3 September 2020		
Result:	Passed		
Vote Count:	Unanimous 21-0		

A BILL TO: Urge Grand Valley State University to Amend the Class Attendance Policy to Allow Excused Absences for Voting Purposes

Recognizing, Grand Valley State University encourages students to be active citizens as an integral part of the mission of GVSU to “educate students to shape their lives, their professions, and their societies”¹; and

Recognizing, that in winter of 2020, the Grand Valley State University Student Senate passed W-20-02 to endorse the Michigan Collegiate Student Advisory Task Force Report and Recommendations, which includes the recommendation to grant excused absences on Election Dates²; and

Recognizing, that in fall of 2018, the Grand Valley State University Student Senate passed F-18-04 to support the creation of a university policy to prohibit in-person assessments, examinations, and presentations on Election Dates³; and

Whereas, the Grand Valley State University Student Senate believes that civic engagement and the democratic process should be as accessible for as many residents as possible; and

Recognizing, that Grand Valley State University does not currently list voting as a reason for excused absences⁴; and

Recognizing, that students may have classes on Election Dates, preventing them from voting at their assigned polling location; and

Recognizing, that students may be registered at their permanent address rather than their campus address due to the fact that the State of Michigan allows one principal address⁵; and

¹ <https://www.gvsu.edu/policies/policy.htm?policyId=4A5DE65F-DEAD-F53F-8DD204667872FDD3&search=>

² <https://www.gvsu.edu/cms4/asset/68CD24DD-C5CE-ACD3-A1C4698B1764F93F/mergedfilew-20-02.pdf>

³ [https://www.gvsu.edu/cms4/asset/68CD24DD-C5CE-ACD3-A1C4698B1764F93F/f-18-04_1\(3\).pdf](https://www.gvsu.edu/cms4/asset/68CD24DD-C5CE-ACD3-A1C4698B1764F93F/f-18-04_1(3).pdf)

⁴ <https://www.gvsu.edu/catalog/navigation/academic-policies-and-regulations.htm>

⁵ https://www.michigan.gov/documents/MIVoterRegistration_97046_7.pdf

Recognizing, that state laws regarding voting vary, and many out-of-state students may be required to vote at their permanent address in another state; and

Whereas, although the State of Michigan allows for no-reason absentee voting, the process of obtaining an absentee ballot can be confusing for first-time voters; and

Recognizing, that past elections have resulted in Grand Valley State University student voters waiting unacceptably long waiting periods to vote, forcing them to choose between attending class or voting⁶; and

Recognizing, that in-class attendance and participation are regularly included in class syllabi and grading policies; and

Whereas, penalizing students academically for missing class to exercise their right to vote is a method of voter suppression;

Therefore, Let It Be Resolved, that the Grand Valley State University Student Senate, acting on behalf of the student body, urges Grand Valley State University to amend the Academic Policies and Regulations' Class Attendance Policy to allow excused absences for voting.

⁶ <https://www.woodtv.com/news/ottawa-county/onslaught-of-new-voters-causes-long-line-in-allendale/1003469997/>