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6 A PROPOSED RESOLUTION  
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11 IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
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16 To declare the existence of an emergency with respect to the need to amend the District of  
17 Columbia Election Code of 1955 to provide students with an excused absence of at least  
18 2 hours to vote in person in any Board-run election, or, if the student is not a District  
19 resident, in any election run by the jurisdiction in which the student is registered to vote,  
20 and allow the educational institution to specify the hours during which the student takes  
21 leave, including by requiring the student to take leave during early voting.  
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23 RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this  
24 resolution may be cited as the “Leave to Vote Emergency Declaration Resolution of 2020”.

25 Sec. 2. (a) Over the last several years, the Council has taken great strides through  
26 legislation to promote voter engagement, particularly among historically lower-turnout  
27 populations, such as young people and communities of color. The Board of Elections has also  
28 worked actively to engage students through registration drives at high schools. However, in the  
29 District’s 2018 General Election, according to the Board of Elections’ data, eighteen to twenty-  
30 four-year-olds had a turnout rate of just 18% in Ward 8 and 23% in Ward 7, the lowest rates  
31 across the District.

32 (b) To promote voter participation among eligible students, the Council must provide  
33 accessible opportunities to vote and reduce barriers that may stand in the way. Students often  
34 must find time before or after school to vote, which is the busiest time at polls, resulting in the

35 longest wait times. Many students must also juggle other priorities during these times, such as  
36 homework, afterschool activities, family commitments, and part-time jobs.

37 (c) This legislation would provide students with an excused absence from school of at  
38 least two hours on Election Day or during the early voting period in order to vote in person. In  
39 doing so, the legislation eliminates the dilemma some students may face between voting and  
40 commitments outside of school by providing an opportunity to vote during school hours.

41 (d) The District will hold a Primary Election on June 2, 2020 and a Special Election for  
42 Ward 2 on June 16, 2020. Therefore, there is an immediate need to allow students leave from  
43 school to vote so that they may have greater access to the polls during these elections.

44 Sec. 3. The Council of the District of Columbia determines that the circumstances  
45 enumerated in section 2 constitute emergency circumstances making it necessary that the Leave  
46 to Vote Emergency Amendment Act of 2020 be adopted after a single reading.

47 Sec. 4. This resolution shall take effect immediately.