

REFERENCE TITLE: public schools; released time courses

State of Arizona  
Senate  
Fifty-seventh Legislature  
Second Regular Session  
2026

# **SB 1741**

Introduced by  
Senator Petersen

AN ACT

AMENDING TITLE 15, CHAPTER 1, ARTICLE 8, ARIZONA REVISED STATUTES, BY  
ADDING SECTION 15-189.08; AMENDING TITLE 15, CHAPTER 3, ARTICLE 3, ARIZONA  
REVISED STATUTES, BY ADDING SECTION 15-341.02; RELATING TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)

1 Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Arizona:

2 Section 1. Title 15, chapter 1, article 8, Arizona Revised  
3 Statutes, is amended by adding section 15-189.08, to read:

4 15-189.08. Released time courses; requirements; private cause  
5 of action

6 A. EACH CHARTER SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY SHALL ALLOW STUDENTS TO  
7 ATTEND A RELEASED TIME COURSE DURING REGULAR SCHOOL HOURS IF ALL OF THE  
8 FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS ARE MET:

9 1. THE SCHOOL RECEIVES WRITTEN CONSENT FROM THE PARENT OF EACH  
10 PARTICIPATING STUDENT.

11 2. THE PROVIDER OF THE RELEASED TIME COURSE DOES ALL OF THE  
12 FOLLOWING:

13 (a) RECORDS THE ATTENDANCE OF EACH PARTICIPATING STUDENT AND  
14 PROVIDES COPIES OF THE ATTENDANCE RECORDS TO THE CHARTER SCHOOL.

15 (b) ASSUMES ALL LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR EACH PARTICIPATING STUDENT  
16 WHILE THE STUDENT IS UNDER THE PROVIDER'S CONTROL.

17 (c) PROVIDES RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION TO PARTICIPATING STUDENTS FOR AT  
18 LEAST ONE HOUR BUT NOT MORE THAN FIVE HOURS PER WEEK.

19 (d) DEMONSTRATES THAT THE INSTRUCTOR OF THE RELEASED TIME COURSE  
20 HAS SIMILAR QUALIFICATIONS AS INSTRUCTORS WHO ARE EMPLOYED BY THE CHARTER  
21 SCHOOL.

22 3. ANY NECESSARY TRANSPORTATION SERVICES RELATING TO A RELEASED  
23 TIME COURSE ARE PROVIDED BY THE RELEASED TIME COURSE PROVIDER,  
24 PARTICIPATING STUDENTS OR THE PARENTS OF PARTICIPATING STUDENTS.

25 4. EACH PARTICIPATING STUDENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR COMPLETING ANY  
26 SCHOOLWORK THAT THE STUDENT MISSES BECAUSE THE STUDENT ATTENDS A RELEASED  
27 TIME COURSE.

28 B. EACH CHARTER SCHOOL THAT ALLOWS STUDENTS TO ATTEND A RELEASED  
29 TIME COURSE PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION A OF THIS SECTION SHALL:

30 1. AWARD ACADEMIC CREDIT TO EACH STUDENT WHO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETES  
31 THE RELEASED TIME COURSE. THE CHARTER SCHOOL SHALL DETERMINE HOW MUCH  
32 CREDIT TO AWARD FOR THE RELEASED TIME COURSE BY USING ONLY SECULAR  
33 CRITERIA THAT ARE SUBSTANTIALLY THE SAME AS THE CRITERIA THAT THE CHARTER  
34 SCHOOL USES TO EVALUATE SIMILAR COURSES, INCLUDING ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

35 (a) THE NUMBER OF HOURS OF CLASSROOM INSTRUCTIONAL TIME.

36 (b) THE COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS THAT ARE  
37 USED FOR THE RELEASED TIME COURSE ACCORDING TO THE SYLLABUS.

38 (c) STUDENT ASSESSMENTS THAT ARE CONDUCTED BY THE RELEASED TIME  
39 COURSE PROVIDER.

40 2. COUNT ANY TIME THAT A STUDENT SPENDS PARTICIPATING IN A RELEASED  
41 TIME COURSE DURING REGULAR SCHOOL HOURS AS INSTRUCTIONAL TIME AND  
42 INSTRUCTIONAL HOURS TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS PRESCRIBED IN SECTIONS  
43 15-797, 15-808 AND 15-901 AND TO DETERMINE AVERAGE DAILY MEMBERSHIP AND  
44 DAILY ATTENDANCE.

1 C. A CHARTER SCHOOL MAY NOT:  
2 1. INCUR EXPENSES TO PROVIDE A RELEASED TIME COURSE.  
3 2. ALLOW A RELEASED TIME COURSE TO BE PROVIDED ON SCHOOL PROPERTY.  
4 D. NOTWITHSTANDING SUBSECTION C OF THIS SECTION, A CHARTER SCHOOL  
5 MAY NOT DENY ANY RELEASED TIME COURSE PROVIDER EQUAL ACCESS TO MONIES,  
6 BENEFITS OR SERVICES THAT THE CHARTER SCHOOL PROVIDES TO OTHER COMMUNITY  
7 GROUPS OR INDEPENDENT ENTITIES.  
8 E. ANY PERSON WHO IS ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY A VIOLATION OF THIS  
9 SECTION HAS A PRIVATE CAUSE OF ACTION FOR INJUNCTIVE RELIEF, MONETARY  
10 DAMAGES, REASONABLE COURT COSTS, REASONABLE ATTORNEY FEES AND ANY OTHER  
11 RELIEF AVAILABLE UNDER LAW AGAINST THE CHARTER SCHOOL.  
12 Sec. 2. Title 15, chapter 3, article 3, Arizona Revised Statutes,  
13 is amended by adding section 15-341.02, to read:  
14 15-341.02. Released time courses; requirements; private cause  
15 of action  
16 A. EACH SCHOOL DISTRICT GOVERNING BOARD SHALL ALLOW STUDENTS TO  
17 ATTEND A RELEASED TIME COURSE DURING REGULAR SCHOOL HOURS IF ALL OF THE  
18 FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS ARE MET:  
19 1. THE SCHOOL RECEIVES WRITTEN CONSENT FROM THE PARENT OF EACH  
20 PARTICIPATING STUDENT.  
21 2. THE PROVIDER OF THE RELEASED TIME COURSE DOES ALL OF THE  
22 FOLLOWING:  
23 (a) RECORDS THE ATTENDANCE OF EACH PARTICIPATING STUDENT AND  
24 PROVIDES COPIES OF THE ATTENDANCE RECORDS TO THE SCHOOL DISTRICT.  
25 (b) ASSUMES ALL LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR EACH PARTICIPATING STUDENT  
26 WHILE THE STUDENT IS UNDER THE PROVIDER'S CONTROL.  
27 (c) PROVIDES RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION TO PARTICIPATING STUDENTS FOR AT  
28 LEAST ONE HOUR BUT NOT MORE THAN FIVE HOURS PER WEEK.  
29 (d) DEMONSTRATES THAT THE INSTRUCTOR OF THE RELEASED TIME COURSE  
30 HAS SIMILAR QUALIFICATIONS AS TEACHERS WHO ARE EMPLOYED BY THE SCHOOL  
31 DISTRICT.  
32 3. ANY NECESSARY TRANSPORTATION SERVICES RELATING TO A RELEASED  
33 TIME COURSE ARE PROVIDED BY THE RELEASED TIME COURSE PROVIDER,  
34 PARTICIPATING STUDENTS OR THE PARENTS OF PARTICIPATING STUDENTS.  
35 4. EACH PARTICIPATING STUDENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR COMPLETING ANY  
36 SCHOOLWORK THAT THE STUDENT MISSES BECAUSE THE STUDENT ATTENDS A RELEASED  
37 TIME COURSE.  
38 B. EACH SCHOOL DISTRICT THAT ALLOWS STUDENTS TO ATTEND A RELEASED  
39 TIME COURSE PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION A OF THIS SECTION SHALL:  
40 1. AWARD ACADEMIC CREDIT TO EACH STUDENT WHO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETES  
41 THE RELEASED TIME COURSE. THE SCHOOL DISTRICT SHALL DETERMINE HOW MUCH  
42 CREDIT TO AWARD FOR THE RELEASED TIME COURSE BY USING ONLY SECULAR  
43 CRITERIA THAT ARE SUBSTANTIALLY THE SAME AS THE CRITERIA THAT THE SCHOOL  
44 DISTRICT USES TO EVALUATE SIMILAR COURSES, INCLUDING ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:  
45 (a) THE NUMBER OF HOURS OF CLASSROOM INSTRUCTIONAL TIME.

1 (b) THE COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS THAT ARE  
2 USED FOR THE RELEASED TIME COURSE ACCORDING TO THE SYLLABUS.

3 (c) STUDENT ASSESSMENTS THAT ARE CONDUCTED BY THE RELEASED TIME  
4 COURSE PROVIDER.

5 2. COUNT ANY TIME THAT A STUDENT SPENDS PARTICIPATING IN A RELEASED  
6 TIME COURSE DURING REGULAR SCHOOL HOURS AS INSTRUCTIONAL TIME AND  
7 INSTRUCTIONAL HOURS TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS PRESCRIBED IN SECTIONS  
8 15-797, 15-808 AND 15-901 AND TO DETERMINE AVERAGE DAILY MEMBERSHIP AND  
9 DAILY ATTENDANCE.

10 C. A SCHOOL DISTRICT MAY NOT:

11 1. INCUR EXPENSES TO PROVIDE A RELEASED TIME COURSE.

12 2. ALLOW A RELEASED TIME COURSE TO BE PROVIDED ON SCHOOL PROPERTY.

13 D. NOTWITHSTANDING SUBSECTION C OF THIS SECTION, A SCHOOL DISTRICT  
14 MAY NOT DENY ANY RELEASED TIME COURSE PROVIDER EQUAL ACCESS TO MONIES,  
15 BENEFITS OR SERVICES THAT THE SCHOOL DISTRICT PROVIDES TO OTHER COMMUNITY  
16 GROUPS OR INDEPENDENT ENTITIES.

17 E. ANY PERSON WHO IS ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY A VIOLATION OF THIS  
18 SECTION HAS A PRIVATE CAUSE OF ACTION FOR INJUNCTIVE RELIEF, MONETARY  
19 DAMAGES, REASONABLE COURT COSTS, REASONABLE ATTORNEY FEES AND ANY OTHER  
20 RELIEF AVAILABLE UNDER LAW AGAINST THE SCHOOL DISTRICT.

21 Sec. 3. Short title

22 This act may be cited as the "Arizona Released Time Education Act".