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Bill Analysis
Legislative Service Commission

H.B. 478

124th General Assembly
(As Introduced)

Reps. Fessler, Hollister, Jolivette, Latell, Olman, Schmidt, Webster, Willamowski, Williams, Sullivan, Patton, Otterman, Carano, Hartnett

BILL SUMMARY

- Prohibits a school district or its employees from barring a person who completes all requirements for a diploma prior to the end of the person's senior year in high school from participation in end-of-year graduation ceremonies.

CONTENT AND OPERATION

Under continuing law, a person is eligible for a diploma from a school district when he or she (a) successfully completes the required high school curriculum *and* (b) attains the scores designated by the State Board of Education on the ninth grade proficiency tests, or beginning in the 2004-2005 school year, on the Ohio Graduation Tests (OGT).¹ A disabled student for whom an individualized education program (IEP) has been developed must complete that program instead of the regular high school curriculum and may also be excused from passing one or more of the proficiency tests or OGT. Although most students take four full school years to complete the diploma requirements, some finish in less time.

The bill ensures that students who complete the diploma requirements early are permitted to take part in graduation ceremonies, which are typically held at the end of the school year, with the rest of their classmates. Specifically, the bill prohibits a school district board of education or one of its employees from forbidding a person to participate in a graduation ceremony held by the person's

¹ R.C. 3301.0712 and 3313.61, neither section in the bill. Beginning with the class of 2007, an alternative graduation requirement will enable students who meet all curriculum and testing criteria for a diploma except for passage of one of the OGT to qualify for a diploma provided that they satisfy several other specified conditions (see R.C. 3313.615, not in the bill).

school at the end of the school year if the person fulfilled the requirements for a diploma prior to the final semester, or its equivalent, of the person's senior year in high school. It further states that such a student must be allowed to participate in the ceremony in the same manner as all other students. (Sec. 3313.617.)

HISTORY

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