

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 621
By: Shaheen
Public Education
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Teacher shortage is a growing problem in Texas as well as nationally. The shortage could be addressed by issuing temporary educator certificates to certain qualified individuals, such as veterans, who face rising unemployment. C.S.H.B. 621 seeks to address this issue by creating a temporary educator certificate for honorably discharged veterans and providing for training and mentoring for veterans who have been issued these certificates.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the State Board for Educator Certification in SECTION 1 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 621 amends the Education Code to provide for the issuance of a temporary teaching certificate to a person who has served in the U.S. armed forces; was honorably discharged, retired, or released from active duty; and meets all other eligibility requirements for standard certification. A person may substitute such eligibility requirements if the person:

- holds an associate degree from an accredited institution of higher education, 48 months of active duty military service in the U.S. armed forces and was honorably discharged, retired, or released from active duty; or
- holds a bachelor's degree with:
 - 60 semester credit hours completed at a public or private institution of higher education with a minimum grade point average of at least 2.50 on a four-point scale; and
 - 48 months of active duty military service in the U.S. armed forces and was honorably discharged, retired, or released from active duty.

The bill requires the State Board for Educator Certification to propose rules for the issuance of such a certificate. The rules must provide that a temporary certificate is:

- valid for no more than five years;
- limited to a one-time issuance; and
- not subject to renewal.

C.S.H.B. 621 requires a public school district to require a new employee who holds a temporary certificate to obtain at least 20 hours of classroom management training, unless the new employee has documented experience as an instructor or trainer during the employee's required 48 months of active duty military service. The bill requires a district to assign a mentor teacher to a classroom teacher who has been issued a temporary certificate for at least two school years.

The bill authorizes the issuance of a standard certificate for a person who is issued a temporary certificate under the bill's provisions and completes all eligibility requirements for the standard certificate.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2023.

COMPARISON OF INTRODUCED AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 621 may differ from the introduced in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

The substitute includes a specification not in the introduced that a person who may substitute the eligibility requirements for the temporary certificate must have served in the U.S. armed forces and been honorably discharged, retired, or released from active duty.

The substitute includes a requirement not in the introduced for a public school district to require a new employee who holds a temporary certificate to obtain at least 20 hours of classroom management training, with a specified exception for experience as an instructor or trainer during military service.