

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

C.S.H.B. 621
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Education
5/11/2023
Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Texas education is currently experiencing a state-wide teacher shortage, which is negatively impacting student education. There is a crucial need for effective educators who are highly organized, disciplined, and know how to respond professionally under stress.

H.B. 621 would ease the stress on teachers and education staff by creating a temporary one-time issuance of an educator certification valid for three years for those who have served in the Armed Forces or as a first responder. These men and women who have served our community and country, and are looking for a second career, would thrive as an educator and positively impact students' lives.

H.B. 621 would require that once the certification is issued, the new educator would be assigned a mentor for the two years as a teacher and be required to achieve their teaching certificate by the end of the three-year issuance.

(Original Author's/Sponsor's Statement of Intent)

C.S.H.B. 621 aligns the language with its senate companion, S.B. 588.

C.S.H.B. 621 amends current law relating to creating a temporary educator certification for certain military service members and first responders.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the State Board for Educator Certification in SECTION 1 (Section 21.0444, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter B, Chapter 21, Education Code, by adding Section 21.0444, as follows:

Sec. 21.0444. TEMPORARY CERTIFICATION FOR CERTAIN MILITARY SERVICE MEMBERS AND FIRST RESPONDERS. (a) Defines "first responder."

(b) Provides that this section applies to a person seeking certification who:

(1) has served in the armed forces of the United States and was honorably discharged, retired, or released from active duty; or

(2) has served as a first responder and, while in good standing and not because of pending or final disciplinary actions or a documented performance problem, retired, resigned, or separated from employment as a first responder.

(c) Requires the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) to propose rules under Subchapter B (Certification of Educators) providing for the issuance of a temporary certificate to a person described by Subsection (b) who meets all other

eligibility requirements for standard certification, except that the person is authorized to substitute for a requirement that the person hold:

(1) an associate degree from an accredited institution of higher education, 48 months of active duty military service or service as a first responder; or

(2) a bachelor's degree:

(A) the military service or service as a first responder described by Subdivision (1); and

(B) 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.

(d) Requires that the rules proposed by SBEC for a temporary certificate issued under this section provide that the certificate is:

(1) valid for no more than three years;

(2) limited to a one-time issuance; and

(3) not subject to renewal.

(e) Authorizes a person issued a temporary certificate under this section to be issued a standard certificate if the person completes all eligibility requirements required for that certification.

(e) Requires a school district to require a new employee who holds a temporary certificate issued under this section 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 or service as a first responder.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 21.458, Education Code, by amending Subsection (a) and adding Subsection (a-2), as follows:

(a) Creates an exception under Subsection (a-2).

(a-2) Requires a school district to assign a mentor teacher to a classroom teacher who has been issued a temporary certificate under Section 21.0444 for at least two school years.

SECTION 3. Requires SBEC, as soon as practicable after the effective date of this Act, to propose rules relating to temporary certificates for certain military service members as required by Section 21.0444, Education Code, as added by this Act.

SECTION 4. Effective date: September 1, 2023.