

HCS HB 281 -- TEACHER CERTIFICATION

SPONSOR: Cunningham, 86 (Moore)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Education by a vote of 20 to 2.

Currently, teacher certificates include three levels, the first two of which are steps to a continuous professional certificate, renewable every 10 years. This substitute replaces the three-level system with a two-level system: an initial four-year certificate and a career continuous professional certificate. The substitute grants current certificate holders who qualify for a career continuous professional certificate as of August 28, 2003, such a certificate. The substitute contains professional development requirements for both levels of certification and participation in a beginning teacher assistance program and a two-year mentoring requirement, instead of the current one-year time period, for the initial level of certificate.

The substitute also deletes references to the five-year provisional certification granted to teachers with out-of-state certificates and grants a license to validly certified teachers from other states hired to teach in this state, upon completion of a background check, if the certificate holder annually completes the requirements of the State Board of Education for that level of certification. The substitute permits a fee to be charged for certificates not to exceed the cost of their issuance.

FISCAL NOTE: Estimated Net Effect on Excellence in Education Revolving Fund of \$0 in FY 2004, FY 2005, and FY 2006. Offsetting costs and income could be in excess of \$100,000 in FY 2004. Offsetting costs and income could be less than \$100,000 in FY 2005 and FY 2006.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that beginning teachers need to be able to focus on instruction, rather than feeling pressure to begin a master's program immediately. Although a master's degree is not required at the first two levels of certification, much emphasis is placed on getting into a graduate program at a time when the beginning teacher is still paying off student loans, starting a family, and learning the craft. The bill requires professional development, modeled on other professional licensees' continuing education requirements.

Testifying for the bill were Representatives Moore, Walton, and Wallace; Missouri State Teachers Association; Della Bell, first grade teacher from Moberly; John Prezzavento, student Missouri State Teachers Association president; and Department of

Elementary and Secondary Education.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that Missouri needs to look carefully at other state's licensure procedures before it accepts out-of-state licenses; high standards are required, both as a matter of state policy and under the No Child Left Behind Act.

Testifying against the bill with reservations was Missouri National Education Association.

Becky DeNeve, Senior Legislative Analyst