

Subject: H.B. 5421- An Act Concerning Educators and Administrators

Representative Fleischmann

As a former public school educator and a current Catholic school employee and a person who has received a certificate in two states, I am contacting you to ask for your support of H.B. 5421, An Act Concerning Educations and Administrators. I have done practice teaching at Catholic Schools and Independent schools in the state of Ohio and found my experience there to be just as beneficial as the public schools where I have worked. With this in mind, please consider the following requests.

In particular, there are two provisions in the bill that are important to all Catholic school teachers.

1. The bill repeals a provision passed last year that does not allow for experienced teaching in nonpublic schools as a means of obtaining a Professional Educator Certification.
2. The bill permits student teaching experience in private and religious schools to count towards preparation and eligibility to obtain an initial educator certification.

While it is not mandated by law, Catholic school teachers are required by the three (arch) dioceses to participate in professional development and all three offices are certified by the state to provide CEUs. Private and religious schools also receive Title II-A funds for teacher training.

It is unreasonable to disqualify a group of teachers to obtain this level of certification. The provision discriminates against non-public school teachers, since it exempts them on where they teach, not on any continuing education requirements and experience.

At least 20 states allow college students to obtain teacher certification by student teaching at a private or religious school. All of these states make it voluntary for each University to allow their students to teach at a private or religious school. This includes our neighboring states of Massachusetts and New York.

The student teaching experience is one of the most important components of any teacher certification process. Allowing college students to student teach in a private or religious school setting would certainly provide them with the skills to serve others and further the values and practices of their profession.

I hope that I can count on your support and I look forward to hearing your response.

Sincerely,

Janet Cashman  
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