Education Committee
JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-7149
Title: AN ACT BOLSTERING MINORITY TEACHER RECRUITMENT.
Vote Date: 3/29/2019
Vote Action: Joint Favorable
PH Date: 3/13/2019
File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:
Education Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:
It implements Governor’s budget recommendations.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner, State Department of Education: In strong support of the Governor’s proposal pertaining to minority teacher recruitment. It directs SDE to enter into reciprocity agreements with Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, New York and New Jersey. Also, it authorizes certified teachers “who graduated from an Educational reform district, or a historically black college or university, or a Hispanic-serving institution, to apply for mortgage assistance through the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority.” The bill makes several changes to certification and recertification statutes to increase parity between in-state and out-of-state applicants.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

CABE: Strongly supports the bill that will help expand the number of minority teachers in the public schools. Expanding reciprocity with neighboring states, the opportunity for employment of retired teachers, eligibility for down payment assistance program and flexibility in certification are valuable policies. CABE stated: “Currently students of color account for over 40% of Connecticut’s student population, while only 8.7% of the state public schools teachers and administrators are people of color.”

Subira Gordon, Executive Director, ConnCan: In support of the bill as less than 10% of teachers identify as people of color today. “Students benefit when teachers reflect diverse
racial and ethnic backgrounds. Research shows that students of color, taught by teachers of color, perform better on a variety of academic outcomes, including: school attendance, retention, standardized test scores, advanced-level course enrollment, discipline rates, high school graduation, and college enrollment.”

**Camila Bortolleto, Connecticut Students for a Dream (C4D):** In support of the bill, it would ensure that "students of color have teachers of color who they can relate to and who understand them at a deeper level."

**Amy Dowell, Connecticut State Director, ERN:** Strongly support the bill and do more to overcome underrepresentation. The educator workforce is 9% educators of color while 46% of CT students are students of color.

**Yamuna Menon, Northeast Charter Schools Network:** In support of the bill, it contributes to important steps necessary to include reciprocity agreement language and will help to build a more representative cohort of teachers in the state.

**Maureen Hilsdon:** Supports the bill but asks “for an amendment to include language that will allow consideration of alternative paths to teacher certification besides the 120-credit BA.” Here’s her story: obtained a BA in Canada in a three year 90 credit degree, worked for a private Montessori school in Ottawa, attended Loyola College in Maryland for 2002-2005 multi-summer program for an Association Montessori International (AMI) elementary level training and Masters of Education Degree, completed the Montessori training in summer of 2004, graduated with an M.Ed. from Loyola in the winter of 2006 while teaching at Montessori schools in Ottawa and CT., worked in CT under a H1B1 work Visa, married, became a green card holder and in January of 2018 became a U.S. citizen, taught at the Montessori School in Wilton, the Cobb School Montessori in Simsbury both private schools and her 90-credit BA was never an issue. In 2017, began teaching at Montessori Magnet (a Hartford Public School). She has 15 years of teaching experience and the State of CT will not grant a special Public Montessori School Unique Endorsement (110) to teach in public Montessori schools because of her 90-credit Bachelor’s Degree. She is currently employed by Hartford Public Schools under a “Durational Shortage Area Permit (DSAP). Under current law, she must complete another 30 credits to satisfy the 120-credit BA requirement.

**Tom Nicholas, VP, CEA:** In support of innovative approaches to recruitment and retention of teachers of color for CT. There are currently 588 certified teachers of color in the state who do not have jobs, “this leads me to believe that districts must examine their hiring practices. They can start by participating in unconscious bias workshops (such as those offered by CEA's Professional Learning Academy) and promote cultural awareness to help address problems of institutional bias that continue to persist to this day.”

**Orlando Rodriguez, CEA:** In support of reciprocity if high quality standards are assured, standards for certification in any reciprocal state or territory should be comparable to Connecticut’s standards. He suggests that working teachers with at least five years of classroom teaching experience in cities such as Chicago, Philadelphia, Cleveland and Detroit be recruited because the minority population of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine is low compared to other potential regions for recruitment.
Dr. Nicholas J. Spera, Principal, Marine Science Magnet High School: In support of the bill and seeks an additional amendment that expands to all educators including superintendents (093), administrators (092), teachers (all subject areas), and support staff (school psychologists, school counselors etc.

Tim Sullivan, Superintendent, CREC magnet schools: In support of the bill because the recruitment and retention of minority teachers is critical to our future as a society. Traditional routes to certification are time consuming and expensive and many of the people they would like to see in front of and behind children lack the means to follow these routes. CREC is excited to run a “CREC Teacher Residency Program” for 10 resident students of color who will be matched with 10 of their best teachers who will serve as master mentors. Residents will be paid $32,000. and given benefits to work as a resident in the mentor’s classroom. They will take tuition-free classes at night, taught by practitioners who work for CREC and at the end of 15 months they will be guaranteed a job in a CREC school.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None Expressed.

Reported by: Kathy K. Shea               April 5, 2019