

2023 HOUSE EDUCATION

HB 1329

2023 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Education Committee Coteau AB Room, State Capitol

HB 1329
1/31/2023

Relating to reducing the years required for a teacher to be eligible for a lifetime teaching license

10:00 AM

Chairman Heinert opened the hearing. Members present: Chairman Heinert, Vice Chairman Schreiber-Beck, Representatives Conmy, Dyk, Hager, Hauck, Heilman, Hoverson, Jonas, Longmuir, Marschall, Murphy, Novak, and Timmons.

Discussion Topics:

- Licensure fees
- Out of pocket course expenses
- 20-year qualification for lifetime licensure
- Workforce Retention
- Neighboring state policies
- Professional development
- Loss of opportunity
- Self-reporting
- 30-year license
- Continuing education
- Background checks
- Different states life licensure

Rep Zach Ista, District 43, presented HB 1329, Testimony 18038

Nick Archuleta, President, ND United, Testimony 18064

Dr Rebecca Pitkin, Executive Director, Education Standards and Practices Board, Testimony 17970

Additional written testimony:

Brent Aasby, Discover Middle School math teacher, Fargo, ND, Testimony 17919

Hans Anderson, Testimony 17927

Grant Kraft, Fargo Public School teacher, Testimony 17973

Matt Hallquist, Ben Franklin Middle School, Fargo, ND, Testimony 17979

Jessica Kendall, Fargo Public School teacher, Testimony 18007

Kim Reger, Bennett Elementary 5th grade teacher in Fargo, Testimony 18041

10:34 AM Chairman Heinert closed the hearing.

Kathleen Davis, Committee Clerk

2023 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Education Committee Coteau AB Room, State Capitol

HB 1329
1/31/2023

Relating to reducing the years required for a teacher to be eligible for a lifetime teaching license
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10:47 AM

Chairman Heinert opened the meeting. Members present: Chairman Heinert, Vice Chairman Schreiber-Beck, Representatives Conmy, Dyk, Hager, Hauck, Heilman, Hoverson, Jonas, Longmuir, Marschall, Murphy, Novak, and Timmons.

Discussion Topics:

- Continuing education expenses
- Committee action

Nick Archuleta, President of ND United answered questions.

Rep Murphy moved a Do Pass, seconded by Rep Jonas.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Pat D. Heinert	Y
Representative Cynthia Schreiber-Beck	Y
Representative Liz Conmy	Y
Representative Scott Dyk	Y
Representative LaurieBeth Hager	Y
Representative Dori Hauck	Y
Representative Matt Heilman	Y
Representative Jeff A. Hoverson	AB
Representative Jim Jonas	Y
Representative Donald W. Longmuir	Y
Representative Andrew Marschall	Y
Representative Eric James Murphy	Y
Representative Anna S. Novak	Y
Representative Kelby Timmons	Y

13-0-1 Motion carried. Rep Hager is carrier.

11:00 AM Chairman Heinert closed the meeting.

Kathleen Davis, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

HB 1329: Education Committee (Rep. Heinert, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** (13 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1329 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

2023 SENATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

HB 1329

2023 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Workforce Development Committee Fort Lincoln Room, State Capitol

HB 1329
3/9/2023

Relating to reducing the years required for a teacher to be eligible for a lifetime teaching license.

3:17 PM **Chairman Wobbema** called the hearing to order. **Senators Wobbema, Axtman, Elkin, Larson, Sickler, Piepkorn** are present.

Discussion Topics:

- Lifetime teachers
- Continuing education
- License renewal qualifications
- Incentives
- In-service development

3:17 PM **Representative Ista, District 43**, introduced HB 1329 and testified in favor. #23082

3:27 PM **Bob Marthaller, Lobbyist, North Dakota United**, testified in favor. #23294

3:31 PM **Kevin Hoherz, North Dakota Council of Educational Leaders**, testified in favor. #22150

3:38 PM **Becky Pitkin, Executive Director, Education Standards and Practices Board**, testified in opposition. #23110

Additional written testimony:

Hans Anderson, Educator, Fargo Public Schools in favor #22293.

Grant Kraft, Teacher, Fargo Public Schools in favor #22461

Matt Hallquist, Middle School Teacher, Fargo Public Schools in favor #22698

Jessica Kendal, Teacher, Fargo Public Schools in favor #22937.

3:46 PM **Chairman Wobbema** closed the hearing.

Patricia Lahr, Committee Clerk

2023 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Workforce Development Committee Fort Lincoln Room, State Capitol

HB 1329
3/10/2023

Relating to reducing the years required for a teacher to be eligible for a lifetime teaching license.

10:12 AM **Chairman Wobbema** called the meeting to order. **Senators Wobbema, Axtman, Elkin, Larson, Sickler, Piepkorn** were present.

Discussion Topics:

- Lifetime teachers
- Badge of honor
- Morale boost
- Continuing education

Senator Wobbema calls for discussion.

Senator Larson moves **DO NOT PASS**.

Senator Elkin seconded the motion.

Roll call vote.

Senators	Vote
Senator Michael A. Wobbema	Y
Senator Michelle Axtman	Y
Senator Jay Elkin	Y
Senator Diane Larson	Y
Senator Merrill Piepkorn	N
Senator Jonathan Sickler	Y

The motion passed 5-1-0.

Senator Elkin will carry HB 1329.

10:25 AM **Chairman Wobbema** closed the meeting.

Patricia Lahr, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

HB 1329: Workforce Development Committee (Sen. Wobbema, Chairman) recommends **DO NOT PASS** (5 YEAS, 1 NAY, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1329 was placed on the Fourteenth order on the calendar. This bill does not affect workforce development.

2023 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Workforce Development Committee Fort Lincoln Room, State Capitol

HB 1329
3/23/2023

Relating to reducing the years required for a teacher to be eligible for a lifetime teaching license.

2:33 PM **Chairman Wobbema** called the meeting to order. **Senators Wobbema, Axtman, Elkin, Larson, Sickler, Piepkorn** are present.

Discussion Topics:

- Moral boost
- Lifetime licensure
- Substitute teacher
- Recognition

Senator Wobbema calls for discussion.

Senator Axtman moved to **Reconsider** prior action.

Senator D. Larson seconded the motion.

Roll call vote.

Senators	Vote
Senator Michael A. Wobbema	Y
Senator Michelle Axtman	Y
Senator Jay Elkin	Y
Senator Diane Larson	Y
Senator Merrill Piepkorn	Y
Senator Jonathan Sickler	Y

The motion passed 6-0-0.

2:40 PM **Nick Archuleta, President North Dakota United** provided information verbal

Senator Larson moved **DO NOT PASS**.

Senator Elkin seconded the motion.

Roll call vote.

Senators	Vote
Senator Michael A. Wobbema	Y
Senator Michelle Axtman	N
Senator Jay Elkin	Y
Senator Diane Larson	Y
Senator Merrill Piepkorn	N
Senator Jonathan Sickler	Y

The motion passed 4-2-0.

Senator Elkin will carry HB 1329.

2:57 PM **Chairman Wobbema** closed the meeting.

Patricia Lahr, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

HB 1329: Workforce Development Committee (Sen. Wobbema, Chairman) recommends **DO NOT PASS** (4 YEAS, 2 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1329 was placed on the Fourteenth order on the calendar. This bill affects workforce development.

TESTIMONY

HB 1329

My name is Brent Aasby and I am a math teacher at Discovery Middle School in Fargo and I am a resident of West Fargo. I would urge members of the House Education Committee to make a Do Pass recommendation on HB 1329. I have been teaching for 20 years and have seen the mounting challenges we are addressing as educators on the front line. I can see the stress daily and we have seen a growing retention challenge. In talking with my colleagues, we were excited to see this bill recognize the service of long-term educators. It's a simple way for the state to say thank you and remove additional stress around re-licensure for our dedicated educators. Also, please know that, as committed educators, we will continue to take required professional development courses to make sure we continue building our strengths and skills to serve our students. Thank you!

Chairman Heinert and members of the Committee,

I would like to testify in support of HB 1329. This bill is a simple investment in our teachers. Lowering the lifetime teaching licensure requirements from thirty to twenty years would benefit teachers by rewarding them for their commitment to our students and benefit our state by providing additional incentive to attract and retain quality educators. Lowering the required service time does not interfere with professional development, as PD days are required at schools across the state. This is an easy way to show our appreciation to North Dakota teachers.

Thank you,

Hans Anderson



Testimony SB 1329
Education Standards and Practices Board
House Education Committee
January 31, 2023; 10:00 AM
Dr. Rebecca Pitkin

Good morning, Chairman Heinert, and members of the House Education Committee. My name is Rebecca Pitkin, and I am the Executive Director of the Education Standards and Practices Board (ESPb). I represent the ESPb Board which met on January 17, 2023, and I testify in opposition to HB 1329. Our board appreciates and understands the sentiment of this bill and are “all about supporting teachers” and recognizes much is to be done to keep teachers in the field, yet they feel this is not the answer. The Board acknowledged the potential fiscal impact (\$25,000 a year) of this bill to a fee funded occupational board, yet board members articulated the potential impact on the safety of children. Changing a 30-year life license to a 20-year life license eliminates two additional checks on a teacher’s background. At each 5-year renewal, applicants must answer the questions on the attached application. A recent review of board cases over the past three years indicated the following:

2020: 20% of the cases (33) fell into the category of not needing two additional renewals. Six individuals received board sanctions.

2021: 23% of the cases (65) fell into the category of not needing two additional renewals. Eight individuals received board sanctions.

2022: 55% of the cases (60), fell into the category of not needing two additional renewals. Seven individuals received board sanctions.

In addition, our board noted the importance of the ongoing learning credits needed for each renewal, noting teachers are expected to be life-long learners. In summary, the Board's greatest concern is loss of opportunity for individuals upon license renewal, to self-report any offenses in the 10-year span between a 20-year license when an applicant would be approximately 40 years old, and a 30-year license, thus not meeting the Board's non-negotiable of doing what is best for children.

This concludes my testimony, and I will answer any questions

Part 1. Must be completed by all applicants. Please check "yes" or "no" for each question.

1	Are you legally eligible to work in the United States? You must have a valid United States Social Security number to be eligible for a North Dakota license.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
2	Are you able to provide documentation of your eligibility to work in the United States?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
* 3	Were you ever arrested, charged, or convicted of a misdemeanor or felony other than minor traffic offenses? If yes , attach your signed and dated letter of explanation and submit copies of the court records.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
* 4	Have you ever been dismissed (fired) from any teaching job, resigned at the request of your employer, or while charges against you or an investigation of your behavior were pending, been suspended without pay, or been let out of a contract early? You must answer "yes" even if the matter was later resolved with any form of settlement or severance agreement regardless of its terms. If YES, enter your explanation.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
* 5	Are you presently being investigated by your current or any previous employer or by any licensing, certification, or other regulatory body for any alleged misconduct or other alleged grounds for discipline? If yes , attach your signed and dated letter of explanation.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
* 6	Have you ever had a license denied, suspended, or revoked in any state, or have you in any way been sanctioned by a licensing, certification, or other regulatory agency or body? If yes , attach your signed and dated letter of explanation.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
7	If you graduated in teacher education after September 1, 1980, have you completed a course in Native American studies and Multicultural education? If you graduated prior to September 1, 1980, mark "n/a".	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
8	Can you demonstrate competencies in youth mental health?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

Part 2. List your current and last two places of contracted education employment. Substitute teachers please mark substitute. New graduates please mark n/a.

K-12 School Name, City, and State	Grade/Subject	Dates inclusive (mm/yy to mm/yy):
Immediate Supervisor	Contracted <input type="checkbox"/> Substitute <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	Years of employment:
K-12 School Name, City, and State	Grade/Subject	Dates inclusive (mm/yy to mm/yy):
Immediate Supervisor	Contracted <input type="checkbox"/> Substitute <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	Years of employment:
K-12 School Name, City, and State	Grade/Subject	Dates inclusive (mm/yy to mm/yy):
Immediate Supervisor	Contracted <input type="checkbox"/> Substitute <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	Years of employment:

Part 3. NDCC 15.1-13-15 requires first time applicants subscribe to the oath of affirmation below.

I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of North Dakota, and I will faithfully discharge the duties of my position, according to the best of my ability. I declare under penalty of perjury the information furnished herein is to the best of my knowledge and belief, true, correct, and complete.

I understand that knowingly providing false information may be grounds for denial of licensure. **ESPB is authorized to release Social Security Numbers to the BCI and the FBI.**

Subscribed to me this _____ day of _____, 20_____, City of _____, State of _____.

Your signature must be **original** and dated in the last six months.

Signature of Applicant

Return **original** form to: Education Standards and Practices Board
2718 Gateway Ave, Suite 204
Bismarck ND 58503-0585
(701) 328-9641 office
(701) 328-9647 fax

In compliance with the Federal Privacy Act of 1974, the disclosure of the individual's social security number on this form is mandatory pursuant to North Dakota Century Code (NDCC) 43-50-02. The individual's social security number is used by the ESPB as an identification number for file control purposes, background checks, and recordkeeping. ESPB does not advocate, permit, nor practice discrimination on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin, religion, age, or disability as required by various state and federal laws.

January 30, 2023

Chairman Heinert and Members of the North Dakota House Education Committee:

This letter is to voice support for HB 1329, which will change the number of years a teacher must serve before being granted a lifetime license in our state. Please note that I would have preferred to testify in person (or online) but as a currently employed teacher, I will be actively teaching students at the time of your hearing.

A Changing Workforce

According to Gallup, millennials (who Gallup defines to be born between 1980 and 1996) are more likely to “job-hop” or move from one organization or institution to another. According to the Gallup report, “21% of millennials say they’ve changed jobs within the past year, which is more than three times the number of non-millennials who report the same.”¹ The organization concludes that the data requires employers to consider both how they can attract millennial workers and how they can retain existing millennial employees.

Attracting and Retaining Millennials

This bill attempts to make the teacher licensure process more attractive to new teachers and more alluring to existing teachers. As a millennial teacher myself with eight years of teaching experience, I have experienced the dynamic impact of “job-hopping” firsthand. The past seven of my eight years of teaching have been in the same building. In those seven years at that building, I have worked with ten different colleagues coming and going in just my own department, which consists of me and three other teachers. By the time I entered my fourth year of teaching, I was the longest serving teacher in my department. While observing my similar-aged peers come and go, I have also thought about pursuing other opportunities outside of education.

Awarding Longevity

For teachers like me, the kind of recognition this bill offers may provide an incentive to remain employed in this field. I could, if given the opportunity, explain the many ways this job is difficult. I could also explain the ways in which the legislature, although often with positive intent, has implemented legislation that has hampered public school teachers. This legislation is an act of goodwill toward some of our state’s most experienced teachers. If passed, this bill would provide recognition and serve as a milestone to work toward in my coming years.

Therefore, I urge the committee to issue a DO PASS recommendation on HB 1329.

Grant Kraft

*Teacher, Fargo Public Schools
Fargo, ND – District 45*

(This testimony is my own and may not be representative of the position of the Fargo School Board, Fargo Public Schools, or the Fargo Education Association.)

¹ <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/231587/millennials-job-hopping-generation.aspx>

Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Matt Hallquist and I would like to share my support for HB1329 in person, however, I am in the classroom with students all day. I am an eighth grade English teacher at Ben Franklin Middle School in Fargo; 24-years of teaching in Fargo alone. Each day I helping shape our next generation of citizens. With my occupation comes a myriad of responsibilities and challenges. It also means that from the moment I get into my car to head to school in the morning until I turn out the lights at home at night, nearly every minute of my day is spent tackling said responsibilities and challenges. Nearly every educator I know would tell you the one thing they could use is time. Time to plan, time to collaborate with colleagues, time to recharge. HB 1329 would go a long way to recognizing this need and would be a great morale booster for educators when we all could use one. We would continue to sharpen our skills with ongoing professional development even after obtaining a lifetime license, but this bill would say thanks to 20-year educators and save them some sorely needed time.

Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Jessica Kendall. I am a resident of West Fargo, ND and have been a teacher in the Fargo Public Schools since 2004.

As I am seeing on the news more and more about shortages, the need for subs, sign on bonuses, lowering qualifications to sub, I keep thinking about those of us who have been in classrooms day in and day out for decades. I am up for my license renewal next October. I can say, with confidence, obtaining credits has not been at the top of my priority list the last 3 years as we have gone through the challenges of education during the pandemic. I am a 21 year veteran. I have a BA, BS, MA and more than 60 credits beyond my MA. As a lifelong learner, I will continue to engage in our district's professional development. Yet, here I sit scrambling to find a credit for re-licensure here and there while the standards and qualifications for educators joining the profession are lowered in hopes of recruiting people for a challenging and under-resourced profession.

I was thrilled to see the introduction of HB 1329 and, like so many of my colleagues, felt appreciation for our dedication. I urge you to give HB 1329 a Do Pass recommendation and look forward to this excellent idea becoming law.



North Dakota House of Representatives

STATE CAPITOL
600 EAST BOULEVARD
BISMARCK, ND 58505-0360



Representative Zachary Ista

District 43
3850 15th Avenue South
Grand Forks, ND 58201-3727
C: 701-361-6671
zmista@ndlegis.gov

COMMITTEES:
Finance and Taxation
Energy and Natural Resources

January 31, 2023

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Education Committee:

For the record, Zac Ista from District 43 in Grand Forks.

HB 1329 will save teachers some money, cut some unnecessary red tape, and help retain some of our talented educators in our state's classrooms by making them eligible for a lifetime teaching license after they have been licensed professionals in our state for 20 years.

Since 2001, North Dakota's K-12 teachers have been eligible for a lifetime teaching license after 30 years in the profession. During that time, nearly 2,800 North Dakota educators (an average of about 150 per year) have earned their lifetime teaching license. The program remains popular, with the number of lifetime licenses sought increasing yearly.

Under current licensure requirements, educators must first receive an initial two-year license, followed by an initial five-year license. After that, they must renew their license every five years at a fee of \$130 for each renewal. By the time a teacher obtains a 30-year lifetime license under current law, he or she may have paid over \$1,000 in licensure fees alone. Additionally, teachers must complete six semester hours of re-education within each five-year license period. To do this, educators take college-level courses in the summer, on weekends or evenings, or online when they have time. The courses must be approved by a college and are offered both through colleges and other educational groups. This coursework is time-intensive, with each credit hour requiring multiple actual hours of work to complete. Educators may spend upwards of 180 actual hours completing their required courses for each license renewal period. And as we know, teachers' time is already in short supply, and this required coursework is one more obligation they must jam into their busy schedules.

You also probably won't be surprised to learn that teachers usually pay for these courses out of their own pockets. A typical cost is \$50 per credit hour, plus additional course fees. That amounts to an additional \$300 in

course costs (plus even more in course fees) during each license renewal period—or a total of at least \$1,500 in course costs before an educator is eligible for a lifetime license under current law. All-in, a teacher faces expenses of over \$2,500 before obtaining his or her 30-year lifetime license.

HB 1329 seeks to lessen this financial impact by making one simple change to our existing licensure framework: allowing teachers to qualify for this license after 20 years as licensed professionals. The red tape that HB 1329 cuts would save teachers significant money and time. By eliminating two license renewal cycles, we could save teachers \$260 in license fees, hundreds of hours of coursework, and over \$600 in credit costs and course fees alone. In doing so, we would incentivize more teachers to stay working in the classroom for longer after they earn that lifetime license. I'd direct the Committee's attention to the testimony submitted from numerous current educators about the positive impact this bill would have on teacher morale and retention. In this era of serious workforce challenges, especially in education, even modest gains in retention will make a big difference.

Some may argue, though, that the extra two license renewal cycles are essential for making sure our educators keep up with the latest trends and model the lifetime of learning we hope to instill in our students. I strongly agree with that goal, as I know everyone on this Committee does. But the fact of that matter is our teachers already engage in career development distinct from formal licensure requirements. Every teacher must engage in yearly professional development that is mandated both by Century Code and in their contracts with their local districts. None of that would change with this bill. Nor would local districts be prohibited from requiring or incentivizing additional coursework above and beyond that which would be required for obtaining a lifetime license. Indeed, many districts already condition compensation increases on an educator obtaining an advanced degree or hitting a certain amount of credit hours of higher education coursework. Beyond that, of course, we know our educators will continue to pursue career development opportunities because they are passionate about their careers and about being the best teachers they can be for their students—which is exactly what we see from educators now who already hold their lifetime licenses.

Others may warn against the proposal by citing to the number of self-reported offenses discovered during each license renewal cycle. Under current licensure practices, teachers are required to self-report any potential misconduct or violations of their professional code of conduct each time they apply to renew their license, *i.e.* every five years. These violations could be anything from a criminal offense to adverse employment or license actions. Most of these board cases result in only minor remediation, like the teacher having to take a required ethics course, rather than license revocation or non-renewal. While the raw number of such cases is low, some of these cases no doubt would fall within the 20-30 year license renewal periods that would no longer be required under this bill.

However, changing the lifetime license threshold to 20 years does not represent any sort of substantial risk of bad conduct going undiscovered or bad actors being allowed to stay in classrooms with impunity. Current ESPB practices only require self-reporting every five years—and never again after 30 years—rather than requiring continuous and contemporaneous self-reporting from licensed professionals. If there are concerns about monitoring professional misconduct more frequently, ESPB could promulgate new rules (or request new statutory authorization to do so) to engage in more frequent monitoring of potential violations separate and apart from the licensure application process. Moreover, if this bill were to pass, teachers would remain subject to the state’s Code of Professional Conduct, a violation of which “constitutes grounds for disciplinary action which includes the issuance of a warning or reprimand or both, suspension or revocation of the license of the affected educator, or other appropriate disciplinary action.” The most egregious violations (like serious criminal conduct) can be and are discovered through media reports, and local districts may separately require educators to report any professional misconduct more frequently. Likewise, anyone at any time may make an “Request for Inquiry” into a licensed educator for suspected violations of Century Code or the Code of Ethics by filing out a form available through the ESBP’s website. Nothing in this bill would diminish these guardrails that provide substantial protection against any misconduct.

If I thought this proposal diminished educators’ professionalism in any way, risked a lower quality of teachers in our classrooms, or gave educators a free pass to engage in professional misconduct, I wouldn’t be supporting it. But it doesn’t do that. By this point in their careers, educators have been teaching for two decades, have undergone 20+ years of professional development, completed at least five licensure applications/renewals, and completed at least 18 credit hours (and hundreds of actual hours) of college-level coursework to obtain those license renewals. Many have completed a master’s degree, with others earning a variety of professional certifications and other accolades. They have demonstrated to their peers, their students, their administrators, and the parents in their districts that they are highly qualified and dedicated educators. That’s why I believe they have earned the right to qualify for a lifetime license after proving their capabilities for 20 years.

In sum, HB 1329 is a commonsense way for us to support our current and future teachers and to help boost morale in a field that has had substantial challenges these last few years. This bill gives us a chance to save teachers money, time, and the burden of red tape, all of which will encourage even more of them to stay working in their classrooms. As we focus on what we can do to move our workforce trends in a positive direction, this bill is one small way to move the needle the right way. That’s why I urge a DO PASS of HB 1329, and I stand ready to answer your questions.

My name is Kim Reger and I teach 5th grade at Bennett Elementary in Fargo and have been a teacher for 30 years.

The value of institutional knowledge cannot be overstated when it comes to any career enterprise. Employees in every sector become more knowledgeable, efficient and pay a higher rate of return on investment with every year they spend in their chosen career path.

Teachers have historically stayed in their profession for longer tenures than workers in other industries. This is important, not only for them as individuals, but for their students and the communities in which they work. Children crave consistency, and it's much easier for a parent to know they can trust their most valued and prized asset in the hands of an educator who they may have had teach them when they were their child's same age.

So, it is important to maintain high qualification standards for teachers, through the licensure process, and to also incentivize our educators to stay in the profession long-term. No doubt, that was the goal of setting the current mark for lifetime licensure at 30 years of service. However, we are seeing fewer and fewer workers spend 30+ years in the same job. This is true of teachers, too.

Please also know that as dedicated educators, we will still be required to take consistent and ongoing professional development to stay on top of the latest trends so we can continue to provide high-quality education to our students.

HB 1329 is a simple step the state can take to recognize our communities' long-term educators at a time we sure could use it.

Kim Reger
5th grade teacher
FEA President



Great Public Schools

Great Public Service

Testimony Before the House Education Committee
HB 1329
Tuesday, January 31, 2023

Chairman Heinert and members of the Committee, I am Nick Archuleta, ND United president, and I am here today in support of HB 1329, and to encourage a *do pass* recommendation for HB 1329.

Mr. Chairman, over the course of the last decade, the North Dakota legislature has worked with the North Dakota Education Standards and Practices Board to implement alternative pathways to teacher licensure, different than the traditional pathway that generations of teachers navigated to become education professionals. This was done, of course, to mitigate the effects of the growing teacher shortage. Despite the legislature's efforts, the shortage of teachers persists. Many districts have even turned to hiring foreign national teachers to fill their open positions.

Through it all, a resolute cadre of North Dakota teachers have persisted and dedicated themselves to meet the needs of learners in every corner of the state despite seeing new colleagues entering the profession with provisional or alternative licenses or permits. In short, Chairman Heinert and members of the Committee, ND has made every effort to accommodate the facilitation of newly licensed and permitted teachers while doing relatively little for those teachers who have stayed true to the course through thick and thin.

Mr. Chairman, HB 1329 provides the opportunity to thank these teachers by lowering the number of years one must teach to be eligible for a lifetime license from 30 years to 20 years. You may hear opposition testimony expressing concern that if teachers earn lifetime licensure, they will essentially quit taking courses and earning credits that, without lifetime licensure, they would have otherwise taken and earned. Not only is that argument a slight to the professionalism of teachers, it discounts entirely the fact that teachers, regardless of the type of license they hold, have to take coursework to make lane changes and advance on the salary schedule.

Additionally, teachers complete many hours of meaningful state and district mandated professional development. That said, the teachers I know engage in unmandated professional development simply because they want to get better at the work they love and have dedicated their professional lives to doing.

Chairman Heinert and members of the Committee, please stand up for teachers, please show them that their dedication to the students of North Dakota is appreciated, and please give a *do pass* recommendation to HB 1329.



1 HB 1329

2 Testimony of Support

3 Good morning, Chairman Wobbema and members of the Senate Workforce Development
4 Committee. For the record my name is Kevin Hoherz, and I am here representing the
5 North Dakota Council of Educational Leaders representing your school leaders across
6 North Dakota.

7 We are here to provide testimony in support for HB 1329 which would change the years
8 required for teachers to be eligible to qualify for a lifetime teacher certificate from thirty
9 years to twenty years. All teachers are required to complete six continuing education
10 semester credits every five years to be eligible to renew their teaching certificate.
11 Currently, after you have been teaching for thirty years, you do not need to meet those
12 requirements for teacher license renewal.

13 HB 1329 would change the lifetime certificate qualifications to twenty years. Teachers
14 would no longer be required to take continuing education credits but continue to grow
15 professionally voluntarily. Teachers with a lifetime teaching certificate would still be
16 required to participate and grow professionally through the local district's professional
17 development.

18 We would appreciate that you take this into account as you consider this bill.

Chairman Heinert and members of the Committee,

I would like to testify in support of HB 1329. This bill is a simple investment in our teachers. Lowering the lifetime teaching licensure requirements from thirty to twenty years would benefit teachers by rewarding them for their commitment to our students and benefit our state by providing additional incentive to attract and retain quality educators. Lowering the required service time does not interfere with professional development, as PD days are required at schools across the state. This is an easy way to show our appreciation to North Dakota teachers.

Thank you,

Hans Anderson

March 6, 2023

Chairman Wobbema and Members of the North Dakota Senate Workforce Development Committee:

This letter is to voice support for HB 1329, which will change the number of years a teacher must serve before being granted a lifetime license in our state. Please note that I would have preferred to testify in person (or online) but as a currently employed teacher, I will be actively teaching students at the time of your hearing.

A Changing Workforce

According to Gallup, millennials (who Gallup defines to be born between 1980 and 1996) are more likely to “job-hop” or move from one organization or institution to another. According to the Gallup report, “21% of millennials say they’ve changed jobs within the past year, which is more than three times the number of non-millennials who report the same.”¹ The organization concludes that the data requires employers to consider both how they can attract millennial workers and how they can retain existing millennial employees.

Attracting and Retaining Millennials

This bill attempts to make the teacher licensure process more attractive to new teachers and more alluring to existing teachers. As a millennial teacher myself with eight years of teaching experience, I have experienced the dynamic impact of “job-hopping” firsthand. The past seven of my eight years of teaching have been in the same building. In those seven years at that building, I have worked with ten different colleagues coming and going in just my own department, which consists of me and three other teachers. By the time I entered my fourth year of teaching, I was the longest serving teacher in my department. I recently learned that two of my three current department colleagues, one a millennial, will be vacating their positions at the end of this school year. While observing my similar-aged peers come and go, I have also thought about pursuing other opportunities outside of education.

Awarding Longevity

For teachers like me, the kind of recognition this bill offers may provide an incentive to remain employed in this field. I could, if given the opportunity, explain the many ways this job is difficult. I could also explain the ways in which the legislature, although often with positive intent, has implemented legislation that has hampered public school teachers. This legislation is an act of goodwill toward some of our state’s most experienced teachers. If passed, this bill would provide recognition and serve as a milestone to work toward in my coming years.

Therefore, I urge the committee to issue a DO PASS recommendation on HB 1329.

Grant Kraft

Teacher, Fargo Public Schools
Fargo, ND – District 45

(This testimony is my own and may not be representative of the position of the Fargo School Board, Fargo Public Schools, or the Fargo Education Association.)

¹ <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/231587/millennials-job-hopping-generation.aspx>

Chairman Wobbema and members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee,

My name is Matt Hallquist and I would like to share my support for HB1329 in person, however, I am in the classroom with students all day. I am an eighth grade English teacher at Ben Franklin Middle School in Fargo; 24-years of teaching in Fargo alone. Each day I help shape our next generation of citizens. With my occupation comes a myriad of responsibilities and challenges. It also means that from the moment I get into my car to head to school in the morning until I turn out the lights at home at night, nearly every minute of my day is spent tackling said responsibilities and challenges. Nearly every educator I know would tell you the one thing they could use is time. Time to plan, time to collaborate with colleagues, time to recharge. HB 1329 would go a long way to recognizing this need and would be a great morale booster for educators when we all could use one. We would continue to sharpen our skills with ongoing professional development even after obtaining a lifetime license—approval of this bill would say, “Thank you!” to 20-year educators and save them some sorely needed time.

My name is Jessica Kendall. I am a resident of West Fargo, ND and have been a teacher in the Fargo Public Schools since 2004. As I am seeing on the news more and more about shortages, the need for subs, sign on bonuses, lowering qualifications to sub, I keep thinking about those of us who have been in classrooms day in and day out for decades. I am up for my license renewal next October. I can say, with confidence, obtaining credits has not been at the top of my priority list the last 3 years as we have gone through the challenges of education during the pandemic. I am a 21 year veteran. I have a BA, BS, MA and more than 60 credits beyond my MA. As a lifelong learner, I will continue to engage in our district's professional development. Yet, here I sit scrambling to find a credit for re-licensure here and there while the standards and qualifications for educators joining the profession are lowered in hopes of recruiting people for a challenging and under-resourced profession. I was thrilled to see the introduction of HB 1329 and, like so many of my colleagues, felt appreciation for our dedication. I urge you to give HB 1329 a Do Pass recommendation and look forward to this excellent idea becoming law.



North Dakota House of Representatives

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COMMITTEES:
Finance and Taxation
Energy and Natural Resources

March 9, 2023

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee:

For the record, I am Rep. Zac Ista from District 43 (Grand Forks). Today I bring you HB 1329, which passed the House by a vote of 87-6 on February 2, 2023. I was thrilled that HB 1329 was referred to the Workforce Development Committee, because in addition to saving teachers money and cutting unnecessary red tape, this bill will help retain talented educators in our state's classrooms by making them eligible for a lifetime teaching license after they have been licensed professionals in our state for 20 years.

Since 2001, North Dakota's K-12 teachers have been eligible for a lifetime teaching license after 30 years in the profession. During that time, nearly 2,800 North Dakota educators (an average of about 150 per year) have earned their lifetime teaching license. The program remains popular, with the number of lifetime licenses sought increasing yearly.

Under current licensure requirements, educators must first receive an initial two-year license, followed by an initial five-year license. After that, they must renew their license every five years at a fee of \$130 for each renewal. By the time a teacher obtains a 30-year lifetime license under current law, he or she may have paid over \$1,000 in licensure fees alone. Additionally, teachers must complete six semester hours of re-education within each five-year license period. To do this, educators take college-level courses in the summer, on weekends or evenings, or online when they have time. The courses must be approved by a college and are offered both through colleges and other educational groups. This coursework is time-intensive, with each credit hour requiring multiple actual hours of work to complete. Educators may spend upwards of 180 actual hours completing their required courses for each license renewal period. And as we know, teachers' time is already in short supply, and this required coursework is one more obligation they must jam into their busy schedules. You also probably won't be surprised to learn that teachers usually pay for these courses out of their own pockets. A typical cost is \$50 per credit hour, plus additional course fees. That amounts to an additional \$300 in course costs (plus even more in course fees) during each license renewal period—or a total of at least \$1,500 in course

costs before an educator is eligible for a lifetime license under current law. All-in, a teacher faces expenses of over \$2,500 before obtaining his or her 30-year lifetime license.

HB 1329 seeks to lessen this financial burden by making one simple change to our existing lifetime licensure framework: allowing teachers to qualify for this license after 20 years as licensed professionals. The red tape that HB 1329 cuts would save teachers significant money and time. By eliminating two license renewal cycles, we could save teachers \$260 in license fees, hundreds of hours of coursework, and over \$600 in credit costs and course fees alone. In doing so, we would incentivize more teachers to stay working in the classroom for longer after they earn that lifetime license, as evidenced by the testimony submitted from numerous current educators about the positive impact this bill would have on teacher morale and retention. In this era of serious workforce challenges, especially in education, even modest gains in retention can make a big difference.

Some may argue, though, that the extra two license renewal cycles are essential for making sure our educators keep up with the latest trends and model the lifetime of learning we hope to instill in our students. I strongly agree with that goal, as I know everyone in the Legislature does. But the fact of that matter is our teachers already engage in career development distinct from formal licensure requirements. Every teacher must engage in yearly professional development that is mandated both by Century Code and in their contracts with their local districts. None of that would change with this bill. Nor would local districts be prohibited from requiring or incentivizing additional coursework above and beyond that which would be required for obtaining a lifetime license. Indeed, many districts already condition compensation increases on an educator obtaining an advanced degree or hitting a certain amount of credit hours of higher education coursework. Beyond that, of course, we know our educators will continue to pursue career development opportunities because they are passionate about their careers and about being the best teachers they can be for their students—which is exactly what we see from educators now who already hold their lifetime licenses.

In the House, we heard concerns about the proposal from the Education Standards and Practices Board (ESPB). I am very grateful to Dr. Pitkin for the open dialogue we have had regarding this bill and her unwavering willingness to answer my questions about teacher licensure procedures. But while I understand ESPB's concerns, I respectfully continue to support the bill now before you. Primarily, the Board has expressed concerns about the number of self-reported offenses discovered during each teacher license renewal cycle. Under current licensure practices, teachers are required to self-report any potential misconduct or violations of their professional code of conduct each time they apply to renew their license, *i.e.* every five years. These violations could be anything from a criminal offense to adverse employment or license actions in other states. Most of these board cases result in only minor remediation, like the teacher having to take a required ethics course, rather than license revocation or non-renewal. While the overall number of such cases is low, some of these cases surely would fall within the 20–30 year license renewal periods that would no longer be required under this bill.

However, changing the lifetime license threshold to 20 years does not create a substantial risk of bad conduct going undiscovered or bad actors being allowed to stay in classrooms with impunity. Current ESPB practices already require self-reporting only every five years—and never again after 30 years—rather than requiring continuous and contemporaneous self-reporting from licensed professionals. If there are concerns about monitoring professional misconduct more frequently, ESPB could promulgate new rules (or request new statutory authorization to do so) to engage in more frequent monitoring of potential violations separate and apart from the licensure application process. Moreover, if this bill were to pass, teachers would remain subject to the state’s Code of Professional Conduct, a violation of which “constitutes grounds for disciplinary action which includes the issuance of a warning or reprimand or both, suspension or revocation of the license of the affected educator, or other appropriate disciplinary action.” The most egregious violations (like serious criminal conduct) can be and are discovered through media and community reports, and local districts separately may require educators to report any professional misconduct more frequently. Likewise, anyone at any time may make an “Request for Inquiry” into a licensed educator for suspected violations of Century Code or the Code of Ethics by filing out a form available through the ESBP’s website. Nothing in this bill would diminish these guardrails that provide substantial protection against any misconduct.

Indeed, if I thought this proposal diminished educators’ professionalism in any way, risked a lower quality of teachers in our classrooms, or gave educators a free pass to engage in professional misconduct, I wouldn’t be supporting it. But it doesn’t do that. By this point in their careers, educators have been teaching for two decades, have undergone 20+ years of professional development, completed at least five licensure applications/renewals, and completed at least 18 credit hours (and hundreds of actual hours) of college-level coursework to obtain those license renewals. Many have completed a master’s degree, with others earning a variety of professional certifications and other accolades. They have demonstrated to their peers, their students, their administrators, and the parents in their districts that they are highly qualified and dedicated educators. That’s why I believe they have earned the right to qualify for a lifetime license after proving their capabilities for 20 years.

In sum, HB 1329 is a commonsense way for us to support our current and future teachers and to help boost morale in a field that has had substantial challenges these last few years. This bill gives us a chance to save teachers money, time, and the burden of red tape, all of which will encourage even more of them to stay working in their classrooms. As we focus on what we can do to move our workforce trends in a positive direction, this bill is one way to move the needle the right way. That’s why I urge a **do pass** recommendation for HB 1329, and I stand ready to answer your questions.



Testimony SB 1329
Education Standards and Practices Board
Senate Workforce Development Committee
March 9, 2023

Good afternoon, Chairman Wobbema, and members of the Committee. My name is Rebecca Pitkin, and I am the Executive Director of the Education Standards and Practices Board (ESPB). I represent the ESPB Board which met on January 17, 2023, and I testify in opposition to HB 1329. Our board appreciates and understands the sentiment of this bill and are “all about supporting teachers” as this is the daily work we do. We also recognize much is to be done to keep teachers in the field, yet our board believes this is not the answer. The Board acknowledged the potential fiscal impact (\$25,000 a year) of this bill to a fee funded occupational board, yet board members articulated the potential impact on the safety of children. Changing a 30-year life license to a 20-year life license eliminates two additional checks on a teacher’s background. At each 5-year renewal, applicants must answer the questions on the attached application. A recent review of board cases over the past three years indicated the following:

2020: 20% of the cases (33) fell into the category of not needing two additional renewals. Six individuals received board sanctions.

2021: 23% of the cases (65) fell into the category of not needing two additional renewals. Eight individuals received board sanctions.

2022: 55% of the cases (60), fell into the category of not needing two additional renewals. Seven individuals received board sanctions.

In addition, while our board acknowledged districts have many professional development initiatives, they also noted the importance of the ongoing learning credits needed for each renewal, noting teachers are expected to be life-long learners. In summary, the Board's greatest concern is loss of opportunity for individuals upon license renewal, to self-report any offenses in the 10-year span between a 20-year license when an applicant would be approximately 40 years old, and a 30-year license, thus not meeting the Board's non-negotiable of doing what is best for children.

This concludes my testimony, and I will answer any questions.

Rebecca Pitkin, PhD

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Information on 30 Year Licenses in Other States:

Montana: No 30-year license. Teachers continue to get a 5 year license their full career and need 60 professional units every 5 years

South Dakota: No 30-year license. Teachers can get an Advanced Teaching Certificate if they have taught 5 years and are national board certified. They need 6 credits every 5 years.

Minnesota: No 30 -year license. Teachers can get a Tier 4 license, renewable "interminably" if they upload their teaching evaluation and have passed all exams. 6 reeducation credits needed.

Iowa: If an individual achieves a "Master License" and have advanced degrees and are a teacher mentor or have a student teacher they can complete 2 reeducation credits every 5 years.

Testimony in Support of HB 1329

Chairman Wobbema and Members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee.

For the record, my name is Bob Marthaller, representing North Dakota United and its membership consisting of teachers, k-12 support personnel, Higher Education faculty and staff and state employees. I stand to speak in support of HB 1329.

As you are aware, the North Dakota legislature has over the last many years implemented alternative pathways to teacher licensure to help mitigate the teacher shortage we are experiencing in many North Dakota school districts. Largely due to your leadership and support, North Dakota has made every effort to assist and accommodate newly licensed and permitted teachers to enter the teaching profession and to begin serving students.

Chairman Wobbema and committee members, by lowering the number of years one must teach to be eligible for a lifetime license from 30 to 20 years, HB 1329 provides an opportunity to thank those teachers who were previously licensed and have strived and continue to meet the needs of students and school districts. Recruitment and retention of highly qualified teachers is a goal we are all working toward, and this one small incentive may prove helpful in achieving that goal.

You may hear opposition testimony expressing concern that if teachers earn lifetime licensure, they will essentially quit taking courses and earning credits. That argument discounts entirely the fact that teachers, regardless of the type of licensure they hold, have to take coursework to make lane changes and advance on the salary schedule. In addition, teachers, on their own volition, complete many hours of meaningful professional development provided by school districts, the state or through other entities. Most important, and I can tell you this through my own experience and observation as a former school administrator, virtually all teachers engage in professional development and coursework simply because they want to get better at the work they love and have dedicated their professional lives to doing.

Chairman Wobbema and Committee Members, it is for these reasons that North Dakota United respectfully asks you please show them that their dedication to the students of North Dakota is appreciated, and North Dakota United encourages a unanimous Do Pass recommendation on HB 1329.

Thank you for your service and I will try to answer any questions you may have.