

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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Senator Gary Stevens

SENATE BILL 20

Teacher Certification Reciprocity

SPONSOR STATEMENT

The Teaching profession is among the most heavily regulated professions nationwide, subject to strict education, experience, and certification requirements that vary significantly from state to state. Meanwhile, school districts across the country face teacher shortages, especially in the areas of math and science. Alaska is no exception.

Every state has some pathway to license a teacher who holds a valid license from another state, but these pathways can take months and may require completion of additional college courses, exams, and other competencies including ESL and Special Ed certifications. The patchwork of state teacher licensure provisions proves especially daunting for the 40,000-plus teachers who are military spouses, as military families on average move once every three years.

Alaska would benefit from allowing teachers in good standing from other states to more seamlessly relocate their teaching activity to Alaska schools. And while it is important to maintain our standards for teacher preparation in knowing Alaska's unique history and culture, we can and should accommodate their transition into Alaska classrooms and allow Alaska-specific educational training to follow rather than precede it.

This bill should serve to greatly expand the capacity of teachers to move into Alaska and resume teaching in a timely and efficient manner.

Thank you for your consideration.