

HB 2274 -- INTERSTATE TEACHER MOBILITY COMPACT

SPONSOR: Lewis

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education by a vote of 17 to 1.

This bill establishes the "Missouri Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact" to create a collective regulatory framework that has a goal to support teachers and provide a new path for licensure. The bill aims to simplify and accelerates the process for qualified teachers to get licensed and employed when moving across state lines.

The bill provides that a member state must grant an equivalent unencumbered license to an applicant who holds an unencumbered eligible teaching license from another member state, pending a determination of equivalency.

The bill specifies a pathway for active military members and eligible military spouses to receive an equivalent license, even if their current license is not unencumbered.

The compact is intended to accomplish the following:

- (1) Create a streamlined pathway to licensure mobility;
- (2) Support the relocation of eligible military spouses;
- (3) Facilitate the exchange of licensure, investigative, and disciplinary information between states;
- (4) Remove barriers to hiring qualified out-of-state teachers and;
- (5) Support teacher retention in the profession.

The bill indicates that licensure under the compact is for the initial granting of a license in a receiving state and requires participating states to maintain an updated list of eligible licenses and career and technical education licenses that the state is willing to consider for equivalency.

The compact does not prevent states from awarding certificates based on additional criteria, participating in additional agreements, exchanging of names of teachers whose licensure is subject to adverse action, or participating with nonmember

states. States may also investigate and discipline teachers if the need arises.

The bill also creates the "Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact Commission", a joint public agency composed of one delegate from all member states, to administer the compact, enforce its rules, and manage the exchange of information. The Commission has the power to establish a code of ethics and create bylaws. Additional authorizations for the Commission are specified in the bill and the Commission must meet at least once annually. The executive committee of the Commission is composed of eight members and the Committee's duties include preparing the budget and monitoring and reporting on the compliance of the member states among other duties as specified in the bill.

The bill requires that meetings of the Commission and the Committee be open to the public except for closed, nonpublic meetings as specified. The bill provides details on the financing of the Commission and provides a qualified immunity, defense, and indemnification provision for specified members of the Commission.

The bill provides the Commission rulemaking authority, however, if a majority of the legislatures of the member states rejects a rule, by enactment of a statute or resolution in the same manner used to adopt the compact within four years of the date of adoption of the rule, the rule will have no further effect in any member state.

The Commission may terminate membership if there is a default on the performance of a state to fulfill its obligations or responsibilities after the Commission has provided written notice and provided training and specific technical assistance. The compact will be in effect after 10 states have enacted it into law even if after a review, termination, or withdrawal causes a state to no longer be a member and the total membership is less than 10.

The bill provides for severability if the compact is determined to be contrary to a state or the U.S. Constitution.

**PROPONENTS:** Supporters say that teacher recruitment is very important and this bill will open the state borders to teachers from other states. The bill establishes a framework to support teachers and provide reciprocity for a smoother licensure process. Currently about 11% of new teachers each year come from other states and this bill would provide additional pathways for

more teachers. The current shortage of teachers must be addressed and this is a potential opportunity to add another tool to the toolchest.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Lewis; Missouri NEA; and Mo Community College Association.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say the Missouri certification route has reciprocity with most other states, however that reciprocity is slightly different and this bill would standardize the arrangements for licensure. Missouri has more criteria than some surrounding states and less criteria for licensure than others so having a standard agreement would be a timesaver. Fixing the issue of teacher shortage is very important and while there are only 13 states that are currently in this compact that should grow. The ongoing expense will be to cover the cost of board meetings and to ensure that data collection is maintained.

Testifying in person on the bill were Alex Sergeant, The Council of State Governments; Perry Gorrell, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; Leah Strid, Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony and witnesses testifying online can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.