

HB 2274 -- INTERSTATE TEACHER MOBILITY COMPACT (Lewis)

COMMITTEE OF ORIGIN: Standing Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education

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.