



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2776		DATE: 1/21/2026	
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: AMANDA YARDLEY		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 1/17/2026 10:03 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: ASHLEY DRAISEY		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/18/2026 10:20 AM	
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As someone who has worked in education for 12 years (4 as a para, 8 as an administrative assistant) and I hold a Bachelor's degree in business (with some education classes as well as that initially was my major) wanted to have the opportunity to teach with an alternative certification. The cost to go back to school to receive that is 13-20k and what little extra salary would make won't be enough to pay that. I have a passion for education and this would allow those of us with real world experience and that passion to get our foot in the door.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: BAYLEIGH PERKINS		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 1/17/2026 1:15 PM
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: BRANDON BAY		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 7:41 AM	
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As a parent, I want my children to have consistent, capable teachers in their classrooms. I also want schools to be able to fill vacancies with people who are committed, qualified, and supported to succeed. House Bill 2776 moves Missouri in that direction. Too many classrooms today are affected by unfilled positions, long-term substitutes, or constant turnover. That instability hurts students. HB 2776 expands the pool of people who can become teachers—paraprofessionals, career professionals, and community members with real-world expertise—while still requiring background checks, mentoring, evaluations, and ongoing training. What I appreciate most about this bill is that it focuses on *how well someone teaches*, not just what boxes they checked years earlier. It allows capable adults to prove themselves in the classroom, under supervision, and earn full certification based on real performance with students. This does not lower standards. It modernizes them. Every pathway in this bill includes safeguards: mentoring, district oversight, and performance-based evaluations. Local schools remain responsible for who they hire and recommend. As a parent, I care less about the route someone took and more about whether my child has a stable, effective teacher in front of them. HB 2776 helps make that possible—especially in schools and subjects that struggle the most to find staff. For these reasons, I strongly support HB 2776.



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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: BRENT BATES		PHONE NUMBER: 660-473-1407	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: STATE FAIR COMMUNITY COLLEGE		TITLE: PRESIDENT	
ADDRESS: 3201 W. 16TH			
CITY: SEDALIA		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65301
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 1/21/2026 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: BRENT RAY DOOLIN		PHONE NUMBER: 660-342-5312	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: FAYETTE R-III		TITLE: SUPERINTENDENT	
ADDRESS: 14 LAWRENCE DR			
CITY: FAYETTE		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65248
EMAIL: brent.doolin@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/21/2026 1:22 PM	

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I believe that junior colleges can produce quality instructors and using A+ money to address the teacher shortage seem like a no-brainer to me. We have a serious supply/demand issue in the area of certified teachers and this is a tangible step towards addressing that issue.



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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: BRIAN MILLNER		PHONE NUMBER: 573-634-8787	
REPRESENTING: MO COMMUNITY COLLEGE ASSOCIATION		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: 2420 HYDE PARK			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65109
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 1/21/2026 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: CHRISTY DERE		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 1/17/2026 8:51 PM
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This is a wonderful idea and would help so many people like myself who have had things happen in life where we haven't been able to fully finish college, but are more than capable of teaching a class. Currently, I work in a private Christian school because I do not need a teaching certificate. I wish that I had one, but now that I am working, I can't take off of work and do student teaching because I'd give up my classroom position. I have four years of teaching experience and I think that that should more than count along with my two BA degrees that I have. Between my college and my experience, I would excel at an interview and administration would be able to tell based on all of that, along with my recommendations that I was more than capable to teach. I am sure I'm a better teacher than most of the teachers that have their teaching certifications. I know so many personally that hate children and are horrible people. Just because you have a piece of paper does not make you a teacher.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: DEAN REICHEL		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/18/2026 10:41 AM
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As an individual tax payer I support the idea presented, as there are provisions that provide accountability to school districts to properly follow the process. As someone who made the decision to leave industry at age 30 and return to school to become certified to teach I can truly appreciate why people don't choose that today. This bill may help schools find qualified persons to teach instead 9f the revolving door of unqualified substitute teachers many are having to put into the classroom currently.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: DR. TODD FRALEY		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 9:08 AM	
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As the superintendent of the Sedalia School District I can attest to the difficulty and challenges faced in finding high quality teacher applicants. With fewer and fewer people entering the teaching field the pool of applicants, especially quality ones, continues to diminish. The quality of the teacher in the classroom directly impacts the effectiveness of instruction and the educational outcomes of our students. We are continually forced to employ long-term substitutes who may not have an educational degree or training just in order to have a 'teacher' in the classroom. Having an alternative route create high quality teaching candidates will be essential to the future success in education, public and private.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: ERIC R THOMASON		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 10:45 AM
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I currently teach elementary music at a small local school under a hardship need. I have over three years of college experience/ credits studying music education, but I was unable to complete my degree. Due to my age, I am unable to go back to school to finish my bachelor's degree and then go through the 2-year TAC process. I love teaching, and I believe I do a good job at it. This bill would give individuals such as myself the freedom to continue to do what we love to do, as well as serve the school in which we teach. This would also take a tremendous load off of our schools with the passage of this bill. There are wonderful, possible future teachers out there who would benefit greatly from this. Thank you.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: GABRIELLE BUNNERS		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 1/17/2026 1:40 PM
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As someone perusing education I believe this is a great way to help in the shortage of teachers. I also believe that the classes taken to complete an associates degree could be shifted to being the most important classes. I think teaching is more based on learning experiences and learning the curriculum you're to teach rather than all of the courses in college. School districts also continue to provide professional development trainings for employees.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: GARY REICHEL		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/18/2026 10:26 AM	
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I truly believe that one way to fix part of the education problem is to get certified teachers in classrooms. Having teachers in classrooms with just a substitute certificate and not passing a board certified test is not cutting it in today's climate. We need teachers that understand you have to get certified to educate our children.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: JAMIE ROEPE		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 4:15 PM	
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I feel that with a 2 year degree and continuing education that all educators have to keep up with that this is feasible.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: JASON CURRY		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 8:44 AM
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: JEREMY TIPTON		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 5:41 PM	
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I think this is a great idea. Half the teachers in Risco R2 don't even have a certification



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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: JERROD WHEELER		PHONE NUMBER: 417-299-6931	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: KNOB NOSTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS		TITLE: SUPERINTENDENT	
ADDRESS: 401 E. WIMER			
CITY: KNOB NOSTER		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65336
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 1/21/2026 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: JOSH		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 2:10 PM
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I wholeheartedly support this. As someone who works with teachers regularly, there is no need to have a bachelor's degree. The 4 year degree serves as a significant barrier to entry for prospective teachers and the pay is not high enough to justify the high cost of the degree. College has become somewhat a joke with the commonplace of ai and online learning. Let's implement this to start to remedy the teacher shortage effecting our communities.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: KAITLYN EAST		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/18/2026 2:22 PM
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I have been graduated from Missouri Valley College in Marshall, Missouri since 2022. Since then I have been trying to pass my exam for Physical Education, I have went completely through a Missouri Education program and passed every class with no issues. I have taken my test 7 times. I don't feel like taking a test and missing the passing score by 3 or 4 multiple times should prevent me from doing what I love to do. I have resorted to becoming a paraprofessional in Early Education for the time being. I know what I can do and the way to certification with the exam is preventing me from doing what I was meant to do.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: KATIE GUSTIN		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 7:31 AM
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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: KIM EAST		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/18/2026 10:01 AM
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I am in support of this bill as we need teachers so badly and seem to be filling openings with subs who only need 60 hours. Also, if not this, then the final tests to get certified need to go. It's just another way for dese to take money from good teachers. Why isn't a degree enough to get a job. They aren't drs or lawyers!



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: LARRY SALSMAN		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/16/2026 5:47 PM	
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“Our vision is to stop just "filling seats" with substitutes and start cultivating a professional pipeline of educators who are committed to our local schools.” I think this quote from Mr. Davis speaks volumes. Education scores, graduation rates, and increases in the readiness of our children to be ready for the workforce cannot improve without stronger leadership. Good teachers have an impact on a child’s development. Stop just getting by, anyone willing to babysit the classroom. This is a solid solution to an escalating problem. One with no end in sight. Fund the formula. Letting kids take their funding and go outside their districts will cripple the have nots, and overload the performing schools with negative returns. Ask yourself, “why would the students change schools?” Because of higher performance, better facilities , and better teachers. Move toward a solution. Help ALL school get better teachers in the classroom. Build up the wall of education with a solid base, support teacher development.



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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: MATT DAVIS		PHONE NUMBER: 573-392-8000	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: ELDON SCHOOL DISTRICT		TITLE: SUPERINTENDENT	
ADDRESS: 112 SOUTH PINE			
CITY: ELDON		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65026
EMAIL: Matt.Davis@EldonMustangs.org	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 1/16/2026 4:18 PM	

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The Associate of Applied Science (AAS) in Teaching Education Pathway is a proposed certification route designed to build a locally grown, workforce-aligned pipeline. This model allows us to identify high-potential candidates in our own communities—starting in high school—and provide them with an affordable, rigorous pathway to the classroom.



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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: MATT DAVIS		PHONE NUMBER: 573-392-8000	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: ELDON SCHOOL DISTRICT		TITLE: SUPERINTENDENT	
ADDRESS: 112 SOUTH PINE			
CITY: ELDON		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65026
EMAIL: Matt.Davis@EldonMustangs.org	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/21/2026 9:03 PM	

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In the late 1940s–early 1950s, the US faced a critical nursing shortage after World War II, with hospital-based diploma programs and four-year BSN routes unable to produce enough nurses quickly or affordably. Mildred Montag’s research-based model created the Associate Degree in Registered Nursing at community colleges: a focused, two-year program emphasizing technical/clinical skills to prepare “technical nurses” for entry-level bedside roles.

Today, the US faces a similar chronic teacher shortage, with unfilled positions, emergency certifications, long-term substitutes, and reliance on underqualified staff in high-poverty and rural districts. Traditional four-year bachelor’s programs are time-consuming, expensive, and produce insufficient new teachers—especially for non-traditional or mid-career entrants. A two-year associate-level pathway could mirror the Nursing Profession by creating a faster, lower-cost entry route focused on core instructional and classroom skills

A two-year associate degree at a community college would be far more affordable and quicker than a four-year bachelor’s, attracting diverse candidates like paraprofessionals, career changers, military veterans, or parents returning to work—much like nursing programs drew in non-traditional students.

Critics might argue that teaching requires deeper preparation than “technical” nursing skills, involving child development, instructional skills, and content mastery. However:

- The model wouldn’t replace four-year programs—it would supplement them, like ADN coexists with BSN and then the Nurse Practitioner.
- This proposal emphasize mentoring, evaluations, and ongoing professional development.

In short, the 1952 nursing innovation succeeded because it pragmatically balanced urgency, accessibility, and quality amid crisis. Applying a similar community-college-based, two-year model to teaching could rapidly boost supply, lower barriers, and build a stronger pipeline—without reinventing the wheel, but adapting a proven historical fix to today’s education workforce emergency. It’s not a perfect analogy, but the logic holds: when shortages threaten core public services, innovative entry pathways can help without sacrificing long-term professional standards.



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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: RAY AUBUCHON		PHONE NUMBER: 417-880-0136	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: HERMITAGE R-IV SCHOOLS		TITLE: SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS HERMITAGE R-IV SCHOOLS	
ADDRESS: 302 EAST POLK STREET			
CITY: HERMITAGE		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65668
EMAIL: raubuchon@hermitage.k12.mo.us	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 6:21 AM	
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As a Superintendent of Schools I have to deal with the teacher shortage first hand and any help that we can receive to help with this problem would be appreciated. A teacher with an AA degree is much better qualified than a substitute with a 20 hour online certificate.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2776		DATE: 1/21/2026	
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: RICHARD PARKER, TRUSTEE STATE FAIR COMMUNITY COLLE		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 5:32 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

I serve as an elected trustee for State Fair Community College. Trustees have the duty to see that the community college adheres to its mission. For State Fair CC, our mission is to empower our students and the communities in our primary service area to prosper. Key to achieving this mission is to have a continuous process in place to assess workforce needs in our service area and then to connect students to those needs and to provide the training necessary for students to fill those workforce needs. This evaluation process has revealed that there is a major workforce need in our area for certified teachers, especially in the smaller school districts in a service area where the K-12 school district in one of the largest, if not the largest employer in the community.

School administrators throughout our service area have approached State Fair CC to inquire how State Fair CC might be able to assist them address the workforce need for more trained candidates for employment as teachers. State Fair CC has helped to address the demand for trained workforce for various manufacturers in our area, for trained craftsmen to enter the workforce, and for qualified persons to enter health care professions. We would like to be able to provide the same workforce development service to the K-12 school districts.

HB 2776 would help State Fair CC as well as the other community colleges in the State of Missouri address the workforce need for qualified teaching candidates by addressing two major issues which are currently limiting the entry of potential teachers into the workforce. Current licensing of teachers requires bachelor's degrees to obtain license. This requires a more delayed entry into the workforce and many students are deterred by this delayed entry while licensing through an associate's degree would cut the time to employment in half. Also, a community college associate degree program would be significantly less costly for a potential teacher to pursue than the current bachelor's degree programs. The results through a requirement for completion of half the semester hours prior to entry into the workforce and by the fact that community college have a significantly lower cost per credit hour than the bachelor's degree institutions. These two factors increase accessibility into the workforce.

HB 2776 addresses the concern that teachers will enter the workforce with less educational background by requiring the completion of two years teaching in the hiring school district under the mentorship of an experienced teacher before a full certificate is issued. This may be compared to entry into the workforce from a bachelor's program that includes only one semester of classroom teaching before full certification.

Passage of HB 2776 would not compel a school district to hire teachers through alternative certification. Districts could choose whether or not to take advantage of alternative licensure. But the option could be available to for those districts facing critical shortage of applicants for teaching positions. Districts could choose how to implement hiring and determine which positions might be

suitable for an alternative certification candidate.

Missouri's system for identifying candidates to receive a license to teach has resulted in a critical shortage of teachers. Alternative systems need to be considered, and the procedure outlined in HB 2776 utilizing the workforce development expertise of Missouri community colleges combined with a period of mentorship is an alternative worthy of adoption by the Legislature.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: SHANNLYN ALEXANDER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 12:14 PM	
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I would love for this to pass! It will help the teacher shortage!



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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: TENNILLE BANNER		PHONE NUMBER: 660-874-4128	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: GREEN CITY R-1		TITLE: SUPERINTENDENT	
ADDRESS: 301 NORTH EAST STREET			
CITY: GREEN CITY, MO		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63545
EMAIL: tbanner@greencity.k12.mo.us	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 8:57 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

Good afternoon. My name is Tennille Banner, and I am the Superintendent of Green City R-1 Schools. I am here today to share both my professional and personal support for House Bill 2766. During the 2023–2024 school year, I participated in a discussion with fellow superintendents focused on the growing shortage of high-quality teachers. As we moved beyond identifying the problem and began talking about solutions, one question stood out to me: Why does it take so long to become a certified teacher, especially when other professions have found ways to streamline preparation without sacrificing quality?

My thoughts immediately went to North Central Missouri College and its nursing program. It is a competitive program that produces well-trained, high-quality nurses in approximately two and a half years. I couldn't help but ask myself—if this model works so well for nursing, why couldn't a similar pathway be created for educators, particularly elementary educators?

That question led me to conversations with the head of the Education Department at NCMC, where I gained a better understanding of how college programs operate. Later that same school year, I shared this idea with Dr. Klaver, President of NCMC. At the same time, I know many other superintendents across the state were having similar conversations with colleges in their regions. Two years later, I am encouraged and excited to see those ideas reflected in House Bill 2766, offering a viable solution to ensure students have access to well-trained, high-quality educators.

Some may worry that creating an expedited pathway to the classroom could result in a loss of quality. I strongly disagree. An expedited path does not mean a lower standard. In fact, when I consider how many individuals are currently serving in classrooms without formal educational training due to staffing shortages, I see HB 2766 as a responsible and necessary step forward. This bill provides structured preparation, instructional strategies, and accountability—elements that help ensure future teachers are equipped to succeed.

I also support this bill for a very personal reason. My daughter is currently in her second semester at North Central Missouri College, where she is pursuing her dream of becoming a teacher. She is able to use her A+ scholarship, live at home, and commute—keeping her educational costs manageable. She is a full-time student, works part-time as an assistant manager at a grocery store, and substitute teaches on days she does not have class. Her goal is simple and admirable: to earn her teaching degree, stay in her hometown, and graduate without debt.

Just last Friday, she came home and asked me about her options for her third and fourth years of college. House Bill 2766 would be the answer to that question. It would allow her to remain at a college that is already doing great things to support her goals, minimize the financial burden of her education, and prepare her to teach in the very community that helped raise her.

In closing, House Bill 2766 represents more than a policy change—it represents opportunity. It creates

a pathway for motivated, capable individuals to enter the teaching profession, strengthens rural and local school districts, and ensures our students are learning from educators who are trained, supported, and committed. As both a superintendent responsible for staffing schools and a parent watching my child pursue a calling to serve others, I believe this bill is a thoughtful, practical solution to a real need. For our students, our schools, and our future educators, I urge your support of House Bill 2766.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: TIA JUERGENSEN		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 7:14 PM
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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: TIFFANY GOSSEEN		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/21/2026 8:34 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

As superintendent of Wellsville-Middletown R-1, a small rural district in central Missouri, I wish to speak in support of HB2776.

The ongoing teacher shortage is felt most acutely in small districts like mine. Each year, we rely on at least one teacher who is working under a substitute certificate. In many cases, these individuals are just as capable—if not more so—than teachers who completed traditional four-year certification programs.

Legislation such as this would provide much-needed flexibility and additional pathways for these candidates. This is especially important in districts like ours, where many graduates want to “return home” to teach. A two-year probationary period would allow districts to thoroughly evaluate whether a candidate is truly qualified—offering a far more meaningful and authentic measure of readiness than a single semester of student teaching in another teacher’s classroom.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: TONIE NOBLE		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/18/2026 6:47 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		



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WITNESS NAME		
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:		
WITNESS NAME: TY A. CRAIN		PHONE NUMBER: 573-590-8000
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: FULTON 58 PUBLIC SCHOOLS		TITLE: SUPERINTENDENT
ADDRESS: 2 HORNET DR		
CITY: FULTON		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 65251
EMAIL: tcrain@fulton58.org	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 9:58 AM

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

Fulton School District 58, like many districts across Missouri, is facing a critical shortage of qualified teachers despite extensive recruitment and retention efforts. One effective solution is to allow Missouri's community colleges to prepare new teachers through associate or bachelor's degree programs in teacher education. Community colleges are more affordable, accessible, and closely connected to local communities, making them well-positioned to recruit educators who are likely to remain in their home regions. Granting this authority would lower financial barriers, strengthen the teacher pipeline, and help ensure Missouri's schools have the stable, high-quality workforce students deserve.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: VALERIE HECKADON		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 9:03 PM	
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: ALEXA FRAMPTON		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 7:17 PM	

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

I am a Missouri public school teacher submitting testimony in opposition to HB 2776.

While Missouri faces a real teacher shortage, lowering certification standards is not a solution — it is a shortcut that ultimately harms students, educators, and the profession as a whole.

Fully certified teachers complete rigorous preparation programs, supervised student teaching, content exams, and pedagogy training. HB 2776 allows individuals with temporary certificates to move toward full certification without equivalent preparation, devaluing professional training and undermining instructional quality.

Temporary certificate holders are most often placed in high-needs classrooms — rural schools, high-poverty districts, and special education settings — where students benefit most from highly trained educators. This bill disproportionately impacts the students who can least afford instructional instability.

Missouri’s teacher shortage is driven by retention, not preparation requirements. Low pay, increasing mandates, and lack of professional respect are causing trained teachers to leave. HB 2776 does nothing to address these root causes and risks increasing turnover by placing underprepared educators into challenging roles without sufficient support.

Temporary certificates were intended as short-term emergency measures, not a replacement pathway to professional licensure. Turning emergency solutions into permanent policy lowers standards and weakens the future of Missouri’s education system.

I urge lawmakers to oppose HB 2776 and instead focus on policies that retain qualified teachers, strengthen preparation programs, and invest in long-term solutions that benefit Missouri students.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: ALEXANDRA NOELLE CUSTER		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/18/2026 12:31 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

This proposal strips all of the hard work educators have put in for many decades. It does this by saying that an associates degree is satisfactory education to teach a whole new generation. This is untrue, teachers with PhD's, Masters, and Bachelors degrees struggle every day in the classroom as students push them to learn more. And people with those educational standings are leaving the field. I can't begin to imagine the amount of people with associates degrees going into a field that is hard enough without having a substantial education. During those extra years of schooling I feel may educators agree that they provide the maturity you need for the career. If you are doing this to try to fix the teacher shortage issue in Missouri, you should probably look into better pay while keeping retirement substantial and providing more to schools to keep them safe, efficient, and a healthy work place!



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: ALISHA HAYNES		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/18/2026 8:13 AM	

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

I understand that we are in great need of teachers right now. Retirees coming back in the form of critical shortage is proof of that. However, allowing a teacher to have certification with just an associates degree is certainly not the answer! As a teacher who attended college, received a 4-year degree, and am still a baby in education, because I've merely been teaching for 7 years. However the lack of training a 4 year gives you to teach, as far as real world experience and actual classroom knowledge is apparent. If we drop that down to a 2 year degree...which is JUST BASIC PREREQUISITES that anyone entering college is required to take we will further funnel our education system into the toilet. Less college isn't the answer! Teachers who feel supported by their administration, and by their government representatives IS the answer. It seems that people who have no idea how the education system works are making decisions for the school system that "look good on paper" yet they have never graced the doors of a school system before. Come in, observe our every day life, look at the TONS of demands that are placed on us, plus the added stress of teaching in environments that are not teacher friendly. Environments that are pro child coddling and anti teacher control. I'm not even asking for higher pay, while that would be nice...I'm asking for teachers to feel heard and supported. If you want the teacher shortage problem to be fixed. That is your answer, not making the process to become a teacher even easier. The process should be difficult...we are building America's future. If we make the process so that anyone can be certified with a simple 2 year degree, we will continue to see America fall in the race for superiority where educated students come. Also, some of these students who are interviewed on social media can't even tell you what the capitals to some states are, if a region is a country or not, or list the basics like the 7 continents...yet we want to allow these students to teach the future after 2 years in a college education setting. That to me is terrifying! Please do not lower the requirements of teacher certification, if you do you will see the quality of our future leaders go down the drain. High standards has never hurt anyone, and I feel that we need to continue to hold teachers to a high standard, and start allowing teachers to feel like they can once again hold parents and students to that higher standard as well.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: AMANDA MOORE		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/18/2026 1:29 PM

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Teachers with a 4 year degree aren't even adequately prepared to handle a classroom and educate students effectively, so how in the world can we expect to offer students a proper education when their teachers are even less prepared to teach them?! If we're going to lessen the requirements for educators, it should be the requirements for teachers to become administrators. Those skills are ones that can be learned by taking on extra responsibilities as a teacher.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: AMBER KOHLER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/18/2026 8:39 AM	
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To propose that someone whom has had zero courses in education could be considered a fully certified teacher is asinine, and quite frankly a slap in the face to those of us that earned a true teaching certificate. If the lack of true teachers and needing to use non-certified “teachers” and subs in our schools just to get by hasn’t shown that already, then you clearly aren’t paying attention to what is already happening in our state. So many children are already not getting instruction from a highly qualified educator and it shows.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: AMY COWART		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 3:57 PM
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This bill will only add to the problem of adding more unqualified teachers to school districts, therefore putting our students farther behind. We need to start valuing our veteran teachers and compensating them appropriately. We need to make the profession what it used to be when there were requirements that had to be met in order to do this job. This isn't happening in any other profession where we send untrained workers in to do a job. Why is it happening in education? People are leaving the classroom and education because they are underpaid, overworked and grossly undervalued. Draw people to this field of study by placing value on the educators doing the job. If we are putting underqualified teachers in the classrooms this will begin to deminish all other professions because they are all educated by teachers.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: ANDREA J KAHR WEISS		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 9:26 PM	

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I cannot understand why this would be a suggested solution to the need for more teachers in our state. Instead of incentivizing people to go into education, this answer is to lower the standard.

This same legislative body will condemn our schools for not reaching target scores on standardized tests also seek to make those score goals even more difficult. This same body will take more money away from our schools and give it to private schools (who also do not require certified teachers, nor take the standardized tests, but that's another problem) and then decry the hard work of public education teachers.

Ask yourselves, would you hire someone unqualified to work for you? Then why are you seeking to lower the qualifications for teachers?



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: ANDREW SEAVY		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 5:11 PM	
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I can't begin to express how wrong this is. The answer to the teacher shortage is not lowering expectations; it's properly funding schools and respecting us as the educated professionals that we are. If there were a doctor shortage, would you propose letting people with only a bachelor's degree get a medical license? This is beyond ridiculous.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: ANGIE ENLOW		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 8:24 PM	
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Teaching is a very demanding job, even with a Bachelors degree in education with multiple observation hours, education classes and student teaching. Our children deserve more than devaluing education by allowing teacher certification to be reduced by this.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: ANITA ANDERSON		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 8:03 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

I am a retired educator and I am against this bill because it is not in the best interest of our students. Teachers need more training, not less. The teacher shortage isn't because of educational issues, it's because of the societal issues of today's world and NO support from administrators.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: ANNA LUEHRS		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 9:26 PM
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To become a teacher requires a four year degree and an additional teaching certificate. If we put people in classrooms who have not completed the previous requirements we are undermining current teachers who fulfilled those requirements. Not to mention how unprepared these “teachers” would be. We must think of the students and the quality of their education. We can’t sacrifice our students at the expense of a shortage of teachers. Fix the system, focus on retaining the teachers currently teaching. Pay them what they are worth.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: ANONYMOUS		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
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CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 4:41 PM	

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Lowering the requirements to become a teacher demean the hard work so many professionals have given to the field of education. A better way to combat the teacher shortage is to pay teacher what they are worth as well as supporting teachers currently in the field. The behavior problems presented by students is another area that needs to be addressed instead of lowering the standards. I realize that the current administration is declassifying teachers as a profession, but that is no reason to set the bar on the ground to overcompensate for the lack of pay and support that teachers have been begging to receive. I have been in the profession as both a certified teacher and a paraprofessional for 16 years and the most common things that are driving teachers away are pay and support. Fix those and you will very likely have more teachers return to the field.

As teachers we tell students that we hold them to a high standard, what does this show them if the legislature continually lowers the bar? I beseech you to talk to teachers from every county and find out the real problems they're facing and address those instead of lowering the bar.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2776		DATE: 1/21/2026	
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: APRIL DAWN GASTINEAU		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/17/2026 6:44 PM	
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The experience in the classroom during student teaching and observations are worth their weight in gold. I have witnessed young substitute teachers fresh out of high school put in bad positions because the age difference is little to none. Classroom management is a key factor in a successful classroom and fresh out of high school just doesn't put one capable of that.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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BILL NUMBER: HB 2776		DATE: 1/21/2026	
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: ARNIE C. AC "HONEST ABE" DIENOFF		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 1/21/2026 12:00 AM	
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MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2776		DATE: 1/21/2026	
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: ASHLEY ALLEN		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/18/2026 5:29 AM	
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As an educator of 10 years, this is appalling. The amount of time that I had to spend to earn my teaching degree and then masters degree, should still be required of everyone. It feels like a slap in the face to educators that have been in the profession for so long. The fact that others can do half the work, and begin their careers making potentially the same amount of money as veteran teachers is absurd.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: ASHLEY YOUNG		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 1:04 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2776		DATE: 1/21/2026	
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: BARBARA DUCKWORTH		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 7:09 AM	
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You need more training than two years training to teach students!



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: BARBARA GREGORY		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/18/2026 12:42 PM
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Absolutely not! Too many teachers will be undermined by allowing children teaching children! A four year degree is mandatory! I have 2 daughters who teach and they work hard to get their teaching license.



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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: BARRI TINKLER		PHONE NUMBER: 802-503-9592	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY		TITLE: DEAN, COLLEGE OF EDUCATION	
ADDRESS: 901 S. NATIONAL AVE.			
CITY: SPRINGFIELD		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65897
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 1/21/2026 12:00 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: BECKI NEWKIRK		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/18/2026 12:25 PM

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With the advanced curriculum our certified teachers are already struggling with teaching our students. I can't imagine what it would be like for an uneducated teacher, trying to teach these students or knowing how to help the students with learning disabilities.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: BETH GOLDEN		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 2:04 PM
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It is ridiculous to think that someone can be trained in two years to become a teacher. Yes, we need to change our teaching programs and have more applicable classes but reducing the education of one of the most difficult professions is not the answer to the teacher shortage. It will only cause more problems.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: BETH KANIA-GOSCHE		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/16/2026 5:34 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB 2776.

This bill dramatically lowers Missouri’s standards for who may teach our children
 HB 2776 would allow someone with only 60 hours of college coursework, the equivalent of many high-school students who graduate with an associate’s degree, to become a fully certified teacher after two years in a school and some mentoring. This would make Missouri’s standards among the lowest in the nation.

Teaching is one of the most complex, demanding professions we have. Most Missouri teachers hold graduate degrees or even doctorates. They did not complete years of study simply for a credential, they did it because teaching well requires deep knowledge of child development, assessment, instructional methods, and classroom practice.
 Reducing that preparation to just two years of community-college coursework sets up both teachers and students for failure.

The bill misunderstands what content exams measure.
 HB 2776 still requires candidates to pass Missouri’s content exam. But that exam, run by ETS as part of the national Praxis system, is built for people who have completed a four-year degree and taken at least 30 credits in their teaching subject. It is intended to ensure that teachers truly know the material they will teach. Expecting someone with only 60 credit hours total to pass a test designed for college graduates is unrealistic, and it will not lead to a stable or effective workforce. The allowance for principal observation does not measure content knowledge. A principal without math certification would have a difficult time determining the accuracy of content in calculus. That principal may be able to evaluate the teaching, but they cannot easily gauge content knowledge outside of their own expertise, certainly not at the level of a national, two hour exam with over 100 questions.

High-need students will be hurt the most. TAC holders, those who would be placed on this new fast-track, typically end up in the highest-need schools, where stability and strong preparation matter most. Allowing full certification based simply on “time served” in those classrooms effectively turns our most vulnerable students into training grounds for adults who have not been fully prepared. Our students deserve teachers who know both what they are teaching and how to teach it.

The bill ignores Missouri’s existing, effective paths into teaching
 Missouri already has multiple flexible alternative routes that allow adults to enter the profession while maintaining high standards. These routes ensure teachers have a bachelor’s degree, receive targeted

coursework, and are supported as they grow into the profession. Instead of investing in these proven approaches, or in teacher pay, HB 2776 cuts the preparation needed to become a teacher in half. The current TAC requires a bachelor's degree in the content plus 24 hours of education coursework. This bill reduces the TAC from 144 credit hours at a minimum to 60, and it opens the door for anyone with a two year degree to receive a full teaching credential. If people earned an AAT, can they be certified in teaching? An AA in early childhood?

Community colleges were not consulted, and the programs the bill imagines do not exist. Missouri community colleges do not offer the AAS programs in education that HB 2776 assumes. Their education degrees are designed for transfer, not for immediate classroom placement. These programs were shaped in partnership with the Legislature last year under SB 150, which strengthened transfer pathways to four-year education degrees. HB 2776 contradicts that statewide work and leaves community colleges responsible for something they were never resourced or intended to do.

Teaching requires real preparation, especially in specialized content areas. As someone who works at Missouri S&T, I see firsthand that even physics majors, students who have spent four years studying their discipline, struggle when asked to teach in adjacent science areas. Expecting someone with two years of mixed coursework to teach high-school science, math, English, or social studies effectively is simply not realistic. If the teacher is learning the content on the job, students will pay the price.

DESE's 2025 data show that teacher retention has only recently begun to improve after years of decline, and shortages remain most serious in math, science, social studies, elementary education, and rural schools. [nea.org] Missouri trains enough teachers, we simply do not retain them in state. Missouri teacher salaries rank near the bottom nationally, and even with the state baseline grant, many districts remain far below competitive regional pay levels. HB 2776 does nothing to address the factors actually driving educators out of the workforce: low pay, heavy workloads, and lack of support. Lowering certification standards will not keep teachers in Missouri. It will simply increase churn as underprepared teachers leave faster and increase the workload on those that are prepared and went through the time and expense to receive the best training possible, a four year degree or even master's.

HB 2776 lowers standards, destabilizes the workforce, contradicts existing state reforms, and risks placing the least-prepared teachers with the students who need the most support. It does not address the root causes of the teacher shortage and will likely worsen turnover and costs. For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to vote NO on HB 2776. Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to Missouri's students and schools.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: BETHANY SHANKLIN		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/21/2026 11:54 AM

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Our education system is hurting our kids we need more experienced and educated teachers pay them more not hurrying and filling a spot! They are babysitters they teach our future generations!



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: BETTY EDWARDS		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 6:44 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

Teachers are professionals and if they were treated as such then there would not be the shortage. Our children deserve the best instruction possible. We cannot expect to lower the level of knowledge in instructors and then expect the product of their instruction to be elevated. These children are going to be responsible for running our state one day. We need to do better, not worse. Also it wasn't too long ago that teachers were expected to get Masters degrees and then never compensate for the extra certification. What message did this send to students deciding on a career? Walk in the shoes of educators and then make decisions that affect everyone not able to afford private education.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: BEVERLY COLLINS		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/17/2026 6:46 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

I attended college for four years to receive my education and certification to become a teacher. There is no way for an individual to receive all the education needed to teach in a two year period. In addition, there are many things that are not included in teacher education that should be. To be honest, giving certification to others after two years of education is an insult to those of us who are in the trenches. Decreasing the time and effort required in this profession is not going to decrease teacher shortage. Evaluating how teachers are paid and supported is what needs to happen. Pay us as the professionals we are. What other college educated profession is paid as embarrassingly as teachers? If those of us sticking it out were in it for the money, we would have been gone a long time ago. However, we deserve to be paid a liveable wage. Keep that in mind when you are deciding on this law. Yes, we need more teachers, but we need to be supporting the ones we have, and better educating beginning teachers. Not requiring less.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:		
WITNESS NAME: BILL GAMBLE		PHONE NUMBER:
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI INDEPENDENT COLLEGES, UNIVERSITY OF MO		TITLE: LOBBYIST
ADDRESS: 513 E. CAPITOL		
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 65102
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 1/21/2026 12:00 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: BONNIE HALL		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/17/2026 11:57 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

I currently teach advanced courses at the high school level. As an advocate for secondary teachers and students, I know the deep work and development it takes to cultivate a rich learning environment for emerging young adults. In my forties, I am always learning more and adapting to the ever-changing demands of this job. Teacher burnout and retention are undeniable issues of this profession, and the most effective solutions should strive to cultivate the highest degree of esteem in both teachers and students.

I believe in the next generation and am eager to work alongside young teachers. Early mentorship experiences in the classroom through observation, tutoring, student teaching, and even substituting are often critical for young adults to learn effective teaching practices and to refine skills for their future careers in the field.

How, though, will lowering the age for secondary teacher certification provide the experience, resilience, and support these aspiring teachers need? To thrive, developing teachers need a system that supports holistic professional health before they ever step into a classroom. Many schools are already buckling under the strain of all manner of human resource demands. An accelerated path for quality teachers sounds wonderful, but most teachers struggle in their first years. The inconvenient truth is that it takes more time, resources, and bandwidth to support beginning educators as they deserve.

Earlier teacher qualification, especially at the secondary level, does not serve these young teachers or their future students.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: BRANDI BROWN		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 1/21/2026 3:21 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

In education, we are already seeing a problem with not enough individuals entering the teaching field because of pay. Instead of lowering the teaching standards, which is a huge mistake for students, raise the pay for teachers in MO.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: BRENDA MARTIN		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 6:12 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

I have been in the educational field for 49 years and still substitute locally. I have witnessed those who spend a few weeks to get their substitute credentials and then be placed full time in the system as a teacher. They then have the opportunity to become a teacher after completing a very abbreviated time of course work. Unless you have a God given talent for teaching, this simply isn't working. Please consider this very carefully, because this is NOT the answer to fulfilling future teaching positions.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: CANDRA MARTIN		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/17/2026 6:58 PM	
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This is a slap in the face to those of us who went to college and earned a teaching degree. Teaching is a craft. Teachers are skilled individuals. I'm currently an instructional coach to the large number of non certified teachers in my district. It is very evident that they haven't spent time in a classroom. While they are enthusiastic about teaching there is so much they just do not know. I can't imagine what districts who don't have coaches are doing to help these individuals. They are in their first year of teaching and taking college classes that they will never need once becoming a teacher. How about instead of requiring the classes to make them "well rounded" individuals we create an associates degree with only education courses. My first 2 years of college were a repeat of high school (class of 99). The last 2 years were education courses. Those courses are valuable and necessary. Remove the fluff. We will have individuals who have been trained for the MOST important career, it will take less time, and cost less.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: CAREY JOHNSON, SUPERINTENDENT		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 10:33 PM	
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This is a terrible idea. Do better. Students deserve more. This is not a feasible solution to our current situation in education.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: CASSANDRA POE		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 8:38 PM
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Our kids deserve educated teachers! Lowering the standard will lower much more in every public school not to mention infuriate all the current educated teachers. Thos will not solve he teacher problem, it will change schools for the worse.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: CHARLOTTE MONTAGUE		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 6:55 AM	
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We need to honor the fact that education should require some amount of skill and training. A Bachelor's degree is a small requirement to make sure our kids are educated appropriately.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: CHEYENNA BOOTH		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 6:27 PM
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Teachers are already woefully under prepared to teach as is. Most new teachers could use a few more years to better prepare, take more child psychology lessons and the like to better understand the children they are teaching.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: CHRISTY RINEAR		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/17/2026 6:35 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

I feel very misrepresented in this. I went 4 years to get my Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education. Then take the Praxis to get my certificate. Then I went back got my Master's in Education, and another Masters Degree in Special Education. To work that hard, and have the state come in and state oh, you can now go 2 years, get an associates and teach. These children are not worth the education . Do you feel that your own children are not worth the educational experience of having someone put in the work to at least get a Bachelor's Degree.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2776		DATE: 1/21/2026	
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: CHRISTY ROBERTSON		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/17/2026 4:19 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

Lowering standards instead of increasing pay to improve education is not the way to improve education. We need to get back to greater accountability, not less.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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BILL NUMBER: HB 2776		DATE: 1/21/2026	
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: CONNIE WILKINSON		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 6:29 PM	

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

Do NOT let this bill pass! As an educator for 37 years, and one who is an adjunct instructor for CMU in the education department as a side job to my public school 'day' job, we definitely NEED certified teachers in Missouri public school classrooms who have earned at LEAST a four year Bachelors degree, in education. Even with the content knowledge and methods courses required, until a teacher actually spends time in a classroom and actually learns to skillfully facilitate learning with students, a teacher cannot possibly understand the knowledge, classroom management skills, numerous interactions which will occur and one must navigate daily with children, adults, parents, administrators - all while being a positive, supportive role model to very impressionable students who more today than ever NEED good, caring, dependable and appropriate teachers who can guide them and BE their role model. NO to this bill! Don't lower the expectations for our Missouri teachers, which will only further lower the quality of a Missouri public education.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: DANIELLE OFFIELD		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/18/2026 1:48 PM
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I have been a teacher for 10 years. I completed my full 4 year degree and even with all my training, I was not prepared for my first year of teaching. 2 years will not give new teachers the proper training they need to be in a classroom full of teachers. To address the current teacher shortage, the answer isn't to make it easier for just anyone to acquire this degree, rather, raise the pay for teachers, give proper training, stop making testing so important (one assessment over a weeks time will never properly show how much a student knows and how much they have learned in a year), respect education again and we will have people choosing this field again!



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: DEANNA CRAFTON		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 4:39 PM	
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The people who we want to lead our children into the world and yet we are okay with them not even bothering to finish a degree to get there. That is tell kids it's okay to only do things half way. Your education isn't that important to us.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: DEBRA STRAATMANN DEBRA STRAATMANN		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 6:18 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

We need to give our students a good foundation in the areas they are wanting to teach. Decreasing the education they receive will only be detrimental to their future students.

This surely can't be a serious bill. Please use common sense. This makes about as much sense as a Dr. getting a medical license online.

How does a less educated person make anyone better prepared to do any job. Especially when it's so much tougher to teach these days because many students and parents don't value education.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
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WITNESS NAME: DESIREE GREEN		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 4:24 PM	

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I understand the idea behind this and trying to address the teacher shortages we are currently experiencing. If this bill were to pass, you will basically be telling every educator out there that their hard work and dedication to this professional position has been in vain. The masters degrees the countless hours of professional development, required field experiences, and practicum hours will have been for nothing. I personally think this will cause an even greater teacher shortage. If we're still replaceable by anyone with a two year degree, then a lot of professionals are going to start leaving and saying, "Good luck." As an educator with over 20 years experience, I think this bill will do more harm than it will good.

Another thought of consideration is the veteran teachers, and those that have gone the traditional route of securing a professional certificate of teaching in the state will now have to provide support and train those that have nowhere near the experience and instruction needed to effectively do this job. So you will essentially be adding more to the plates of those teachers already overwhelmed by the day-to-day requirements of being a professional educator.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: DONNA WEAVER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 6:58 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

Do we want quality teachers? That is not what you are going to get by “dumbing down” the qualifications to become a teacher. If you want quality teachers you need to raise pay and put some discipline back in schools. The way teachers are spoken to and the fear for their safety is definitely a factor into choosing this profession.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: DR. JEWEL L. HOLLOWAY		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/18/2026 1:00 PM	

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

I am writing to express firm and unequivocal opposition to any proposal that would grant teaching certification to individuals holding only a two-year degree. Such a policy would fundamentally undermine the quality of education in Missouri and devalue the teaching profession at a time when our students face increasingly complex academic, social, and developmental challenges.

First, teaching is a highly specialized profession that requires deep content knowledge, pedagogical training, and supervised clinical experience, none of which can be adequately achieved through a two-year degree program. Effective educators must understand child development, learning theory, classroom management, assessment practices, special education law, and subject-specific instructional strategies. Reducing preparation standards places underqualified individuals in classrooms and directly compromises student learning, particularly for students with disabilities, English language learners, and those from high-need backgrounds.

Second, lowering certification requirements sends a damaging message that teaching is a low-skill occupation rather than a respected profession. Missouri already struggles to attract and retain high-quality educators; diluting standards will accelerate this decline by discouraging capable candidates from pursuing teaching as a serious career. Other professions entrusted with public safety and well-being, such as nursing or engineering, are not permitted to bypass rigorous training requirements, and our children deserve no less protection or professionalism in their education.

Third, granting certification based on a two-year degree addresses symptoms rather than the root causes of teacher shortages. Shortages are driven by inadequate compensation, poor working conditions, lack of classroom support, and high burnout rates, not by excessive qualification standards. Lowering the bar will lead to higher turnover, increased remediation costs, and long-term instability in schools, ultimately costing the state more while delivering poorer outcomes for students and communities.

Missouri's students deserve well-prepared, highly qualified educators, not short-term fixes that weaken educational standards. I strongly urge the Missouri House of Representatives to reject any measure that allows teaching certification with only a two-year degree and instead focus on policies that strengthen educator preparation, improve retention, and uphold the integrity of our public education system.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: DR. RONDA CYPRET-MAHACH		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:	STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/21/2026 1:34 PM

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

I strongly oppose House Bill 2776 and urge you to vote against this legislation. While I understand the need to address teacher shortages, this bill undermines the teaching profession and ultimately harms Missouri's students.

An 18-hour online program (just 1,080 minutes) cannot possibly prepare someone for the complex demands of classroom teaching. Effective teachers need extensive training in child development, classroom management, curriculum design, assessment strategies, and special education law. This Minimal Preparation sets new teachers up for failure and increases turnover.

Our children deserve teachers who are thoroughly prepared. Research consistently shows that teacher quality is the most important in-school factor affecting Student Achievement. By lowering standards, we risk placing unprepared adults in classrooms with our most vulnerable students.

This bill treats teaching as something anyone can do with minimal training, rather than recognizing it as the complex professional skill it truly is. This bill will singlehandedly Devale the Profession. We wouldn't allow someone to practice medicine or law with 18 hours of online training—why would we entrust our children's education to someone with so little preparation?

Creating certificates that are only valid for private schools establishes a Two-Tiered System creating a concerning precedent where students in private schools may receive instruction from inadequately prepared teachers. All Missouri students deserve qualified educators.

Better Solutions Exist! Instead of lowering standards, Missouri should invest in making the teaching profession more attractive through competitive salaries, better working conditions, and support for existing teacher preparation programs. We should also expand grow-your-own programs and provide financial support for teacher candidates.

I ask that you protect the quality of education in Missouri by rejecting this bill and instead supporting measures that elevate and strengthen the teaching profession.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: DR. TIM WALL		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:		SUBMIT DATE: 1/21/2026 12:00 AM
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MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: EMILY FORDHAM		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 9:53 PM
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This undermines the hundreds of thousands of educators who have dedicated their lives and spent tens of thousands of dollars to get the education they need to be an educator. The solution is not lowering the standard, it's funding education! Paying teachers what they deserve! There's a shortage of doctors, I have a BA in music, why not give me a medical license? That is what you're doing and it will be a detriment to our education system.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: EMILY RUCKMAN		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 10:15 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

**Our students deserve well-prepared, highly qualified educators. Teacher preparation should not be rushed or skimmed on, and lowering standards is not the answer.
I'm not aware of any high-performing school systems that lowered teacher preparation standards and saw better outcomes. The ones that succeed actually raise the bar.**



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: ERIN FARABEE		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 8:16 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

As a teacher who has a 4 year degree, an additional Master's degree and 15 years experience in a classroom, I would like to voice my opposition to this Bill. Teachers are no where near ready for the real world teaching environment after 4 years in college. It takes 3 to 4 years experience for teachers to feel comfortable in a classroom, even with 4 years college. College does not prepare teachers for the real world. This will only effect the students. Students in Missouri. Students deserve teachers who are capable and have full knowledge of both the content knowledge and how to work within a classroom and with parents.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: EVELYN FORTNER		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 1:50 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

As an educator, I am deeply concerned with the proposal of HB 2776. I have been a kindergarten teacher for 13 years; the standards we are expected to teach have gotten harder and less developmentally appropriate over the years. It confuses me why we would raise the learning requirements but lower the teacher education requirements. Lowering the teacher education requirements would not only weaken the quality of instruction but also undermine the professionalism of teaching. Teaching is a complex skill that requires deep subject knowledge, knowledge of child/human development, and the ability to manage diverse classrooms. I understand that the teaching profession is no longer attracting new teachers. However, lowering the requirements to become a teacher is not the way to improve education and fill classrooms with knowledgeable individuals who will stay and become veteran teachers. I strongly believe we should look at other factors impacting education. Things like teacher pay, especially for veteran teachers, support for teachers, and student behavior are all factors that are pushing people to leave the profession or keeping others from joining. While I commend you for trying to address the teacher shortage, I do not think lowering the licensing requirements is the answer to the problem.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: FRANCINE GRANT		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 8:45 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

As a retired teacher of 30 years, I am appalled by the proposal to offer full certification to those with only an associates degree. Highly qualified teachers are more than just talking heads, teaching exactly what is written in prescribed curriculum. A 4 year degree in education allows for an expanded knowledge base and supportive experiences. Those who wish to teach must have a true interest and respect for their content area-which takes TIME to develop, a willingness to work beyond their contract hours when needed and on top of that, good interpersonal skills. They need to understand child development and learning differences so they can make adjustments for different kinds of students. They need to be able to juggle anywhere between 15-30 students of different needs in any given minute, on top of their curriculum. They must be able to think on their feet so they can respond quickly and maturely when challenges occur. A BS in education is literally the MINIMUM, and many will earn that and still not be able to hack it as an actual teacher. Please vote NO on this bill out of concern for students and respect for the teaching profession.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: GLENN HUFFMAN		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/17/2026 11:22 AM	
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Lowering the requirement to become a teacher will have negative impact for the school system. Our academic skill level is already low compared with other developed countries, we need to hire more qualified teachers and let them teacher and offer incentive to attract more people to become teachers.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: GRANT TALBURT		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/18/2026 2:40 PM
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Lessening the restrictions of teachers will lessen the training needed to successfully do their job, lower the delivery of instruction, and lower student comprehension and learning. Educators with 4 years of education already fill ill-prepared, why would you lower it to two years and increase the teacher drop out.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: GUILIAN WEI		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
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EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/17/2026 11:12 AM	
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Lowering the teachers certification will not be benefiting the school children. We need qualified individuals who have passed certain tests to become a teacher, we can't give out teachers' certification to anyone who doesn't qualify.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: HALEY EGGERS		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/17/2026 3:25 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

I implore you to oppose this bill.

There are many loopholes in the education certification process that allow under-informed and unqualified individuals to become teachers. Passing a bill that allows someone to gain the same certification as a four-year bachelor’s degree scholar with a two-year associate degree from a community college is blatant disrespect for educators across Missouri. Not all teachers that come from this background are bad educators, but the number of good teachers will decrease as a result of this bill.

Being a good educator does not only include adequate content knowledge, but experience in schools with students and understanding how their development affects their learning. Two years of schooling, that is more likely completed online than on campus, does not provide people with the resources needed to succeed in any of these categories. Putting these undernourished teachers into classrooms is robbing students of a valuable and proper education.

In my recently completed four-year degree program, I completed over 200 hours of in-classroom experience instructing and observing, as well as countless hours of classes centered around, teaching, leadership, adolescent and leadership psychology, and a wide variety of English literature and language courses. The sheer amount of time required to learn all of these important concepts and skills is simply not possible through a two-year degree program. I have been complemented endlessly by other educators, not because of who I am, but how well-equipped I have become from my college experience.

I cannot express enough how grateful I am for all of the professors and support I had in school and for all of the teachers I have worked with over the last 3.5 years.

Thank you for your time.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: HALEY RYAN		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 12:22 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

I am a licensed teacher currently in my fourth year of teaching. I completed a four-year bachelor's degree in education and went on to earn my master's degree. Based on both my formal preparation and my real-world classroom experience, I strongly oppose any effort to certify teachers with only an associate degree.

If the intent of this bill is to address teacher shortages, it does so by weakening the very foundation of the profession. Teacher preparation is not an area that can be shortened without consequences to students. Teaching requires professional maturity, judgment, and depth of knowledge that simply do not exist at the associate degree level.

I earned my associate degree at just over 20 years old, and I was not prepared to lead a classroom. Even after completing my bachelor's degree at 24, I was still developing the skills necessary to manage the realities of teaching. The growth that occurs during those additional years of education and supervised practice is critical.

During my bachelor's program alone, I completed coursework in pedagogy, classroom management, instructional planning, assessment, educational technology, English Learner instruction, special education law and IEP implementation, and child development. This was paired with supervised fieldwork and student teaching. Only after that foundation did I complete extensive coursework in my specific content area and continue professional training.

Teaching is not a job that can be learned on the fly. It requires an understanding of how students learn, how to manage complex classroom environments, how to meet legal and ethical obligations, and how to support students with diverse academic, behavioral, and special education needs.

There is a persistent misunderstanding of what teaching entails. Teachers are not simply supervising children or delivering textbook content. We are trained professionals responsible for student learning, safety, compliance, and long-term outcomes. Lowering certification standards communicates that this expertise is unnecessary.

If we want qualified, effective teachers in classrooms, the solution is to invest in preparation, support, and retention, not to reduce professional standards. Our students deserve educators who are fully trained, fully prepared, and fully supported to do this work well.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: HANNAH FLETCHER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/18/2026 5:02 AM	
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This is my 23 year as a teacher. I understand that there is a teacher shortage. But I don't not think lowering the expectations for future teachers is what's best for kids. More needs to be done to change the unrealistic demands and figure out why teachers aren't staying in this career.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: HEATHER GAHRING		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 8:46 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

Our kids deserve highly qualified professionals who have both the background knowledge and practical experience required for students to grow and learn.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2776		DATE: 1/21/2026
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: JACLYN BROWN		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/17/2026 5:30 PM

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

As a certified educator myself, I know that we in the education profession have long looked up to countries whose educational systems far outperform ours. Those countries have far longer and more intense teacher education programs than we have ever had. Lowering the requirements to become certified will be a big step in the wrong direction and a serious disservice to our children. I understand there is a shortage of educators currently, but this proposal will only be a bandaid on a mortal wound. Please speak to actual teachers and students; they can generally explain the true problems and how more respect for teachers, higher pay, and less micromanagement will all be better steps in the right direction.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2776		DATE: 1/21/2026
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: JANIE MEIER		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/17/2026 10:09 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

The future of Missouri is dependent on a well educated population. An associate degree is sufficient for a substitute teacher but NOT for a certified teacher. Teachers must be trained to deal with today's students, to educate all students whether gifted, learning disabled or otherwise. A minimum level of required education should be a bachelor's degree.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: JASMINE LAUER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 6:09 PM	
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The standards of our education system do not need lowered. Our children deserve to have a teacher with a 4 year degree and proper training.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: JEANETTE ESSER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 4:55 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

The welfare of our students should be the main concern whenever changes are made to education. Lowering the standards for certification for teachers provides nothing of value to our students. It only puts unqualified people in the classroom. This is not the way to deal with teacher shortages.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2776		DATE: 1/21/2026	
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: JENNA LEE		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 12:33 PM	
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MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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BILL NUMBER: HB 2776		DATE: 1/21/2026	
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: JENNIFER PENSERUM		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/21/2026 10:20 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

Educators should be educated, not just trained. A four year bachelor's degree both educates and trains. A two year associate degree only trains. Teaching is a profession, not a trade. Educators must be educated.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: JENNIFER RICE		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 6:37 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

I have been a teacher for 29 years. There is no way that an individual can graduate with an associate's degree and be ready to deal with the children that are entering our classrooms today. (especially when they are entering the workforce at 20 years old) Our students are coming with so much trauma, a lack of executive functioning skills, and an inability to have the grit and desire to learn in an educational setting. There is no way a 2 year program can prepare young people to educate our youth that are coming to us with higher needs each year.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: JEREMY PALMER		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/18/2026 3:50 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

It is important for students to have proper training in education. By passing this bill it will not have students prepared to enter the classroom as educators. There is a reason why student go to 4 year universities to get an education degree. If this passes it would be the worst case for college students and the students they would be teaching. It would only give them the basics to teaching and not prepare them very well. Teaching isn't easy but if train and prepared well it will make their teaching career more meaningful. I oppose this bill!



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: JESSICA CLONINGER		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 12:47 PM

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

It is offensive to think that after all the education that was required of me to get a teaching job and then a school counseling job, that now we are just going to allow people with associates degrees to be in charge of educating our students. Will those of us with the degrees be financially compensated for all the education we've already received if this passes? This does not, in any way, address the real issues of teacher shortage. Pay teachers what they are worth and there would not be a shortage.

I've devoted almost 20 years of my life to serving in public education. Even after all my years of experience, for me to take a different position, such as in administration, DESE tells me that I require an entirely new masters degree even though I already possess a masters in school counseling, which required almost double the amount of masters hours than a principal or superintendent certificate. There is no easy way to move up the ranks of education without continuing education and thousands of dollars, but now we are going to allow someone straight out of high school to walk into our classrooms and teach? I say "fresh out of high school" because likely that will be the case for many. The majority of my high school seniors graduate high school with enough college hours to already have an associates. This does not solve any of the problems that the department of education are facing.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: JESSICA DITZLER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 7:39 PM	
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I think that by certifying those that only have an Associates you are dumbing down the whole profession and what some of us worked very hard for.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: JESSIE BAYLESS		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 10:30 PM	

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

Lowering the standards to fill teacher positions only compounds the issues already being faced in public education. Raise the pay, attract more teachers, and raise the standards. That should be the solution. Gutting education is gutting society. Lowering the standards there is ultimately lowering standards everywhere.

On a personal note, I am 12 years into teaching, with a Masters in Education and make the same as a rural EMT's starting pay in the town I teach in. Not a paramedic, an EMT, starting pay. I paid for my masters out of pocket, but I am still paying on student loans for my teaching degree. I did not take out the max loans either. I was conservative and only took what I needed. I have always played by the rules and done my best to do what was right, no matter the cost. But the promises made for doing the work, paying my dues, has not panned out. I love teaching. It is my passion. But lowering the standards is not just a poor idea, it is a slap in the face of all that have sacrificed and bought into the American dream of being an educator. The standard and fellowship that we worked so hard to achieve.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: JODIE L WILBANKS		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/17/2026 10:58 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

I just have one question...how does this bill enable the person to gain the knowledge to pass the excruciating teacher certification if they only have 2 years of college? That is just the basic courses!! The last 2 years are the actual teaching courses. As a person it took awhile to get the 4 year degree finished, it's not quite fair! This bill will take all respect of our profession and strip it! I am very opposed to this.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: JODIE WILSON		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/17/2026 5:34 PM

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

Being in the educational field for over 12 years now, I am seeing the effects of provisional teachers in the classroom. These are teachers with limited schooling, mostly around the 2 year mark. They are severely undereducated to be teaching the curriculum and illequipped with the resources needed to implement quality education and a firm grasp on the behavioral side. It is embarrassing to be alongside some of these individuals, as they represent our education system as a whole. Furthermore, it is discriminatory to hire on a teacher with two years of college and pay them the same wage as you pay a teacher who has went to school for the full four years. Teachers should be classified as professionals and if we want to keep thinking of them as such, we need quality educators to teach the youth that will be leading our country tomorrow. We have not ever decreased schooling for doctors, nurses, therapists, psychologists, business degrees, lawyers etc. Teachers are what shapes all of these professions by providing a strong education. Treat us like professionals.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: JOSHUA HEIMSOTH		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 12:58 PM	

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

I have been a classroom educator in Missouri for twenty years. During that time, I have watched our state repeatedly lower standards for teacher certification while simultaneously remaining in the bottom ten percent nationally for education funding. These two realities are not unrelated.

Missouri does, without question, face a significant teacher shortage. However, the solution to that shortage cannot be to place underprepared individuals—some as young as 21 years old, holding only a two-year degree—in charge of their own classrooms. That approach does not solve the problem; it accelerates the decline of education as a respected profession.

This bill sends a clear and troubling message beyond our borders: that Missouri does not take public education seriously, does not prioritize the future of its children, and does not value the thousands of educators who have invested years of their lives earning bachelor’s degrees and advanced credentials in order to serve students well.

Lowering professional standards to historic lows and flooding classrooms with underqualified teachers is not a strategy—it is a shortcut. And shortcuts in education always come at the expense of children.

If Missouri truly wants to address the teacher shortage, the answer lies in making education a profession that talented, high-performing students want to enter and remain in. That means real investment: state-supported scholarships that allow future educators to graduate with little or no student debt, competitive salaries that reflect the level of responsibility and education required, and working conditions that allow teachers to focus on teaching rather than survival.

Choosing the least expensive option may balance a budget line, but it mortgages our children’s future.

Additionally, this bill places an unfair burden on veteran educators. Experienced teachers will be expected not only to teach their own students, but also to compensate for the training these new teachers did not receive—essentially serving as unpaid instructors for a missing four-year degree program. That additional strain risks burnout, attrition, and a cascading collapse of already fragile systems.

This legislation is detrimental to students, deeply insulting to the educators currently serving Missouri’s schools, and a declaration that investment in education is not even a secondary priority.

Missouri's children deserve qualified teachers. Missouri's teachers deserve respect. And Missouri's future deserves better than the cheapest possible solution.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: JUDY BARTON		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/17/2026 10:53 PM	

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

As a veteran teacher with a master's and specialist degree, I am strongly opposed to this. Retaining and recruiting quality teachers is vital to education. Teachers need training on class management, curriculum, and using sound teachings, as well as training under a veteran teacher. Students entering school are less prepared than they were 50 years ago because many parents work extended hours and children are entertained by technology. Therefore, they do not have social skills. Drug and alcohol babies struggle and are often special needs requiring additional training. Our children need and deserve the best we can give them. To retain quality teachers, salaries need to continue rising, class sizes decreased, and educators treated as professionals and allowed to make decisions in the best interest of their students. The foundation for all occupations begins in school. I sure don't want a Dr doing surgery on me with just 2 years of training. Please do not pass this.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: JULIE WOOLSEY		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/18/2026 8:31 AM

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

We need more teachers, but we do not need more teachers with less qualifications. Our children deserve a quality education from educators who meet the high expectations and standards to obtain the degree.

Not only is it wrong to reduce requirements to become a teacher but it feels like a huge slap in the face to all of us who put in the time and effort to meet the high standards to become a professional in our field.

I do not support this change. Teachers are already losing respect as professionals and this would only make this challenge even more difficult.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: JUNE SNAPP		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 9:49 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

I opposed the implementation of a two-year teaching certification because it risks lowering professional standards and does not adequately prepare educators for the complexities of today's classrooms. Teaching requires far more than content knowledge; it demands a deep understanding of child development, instructional strategies, classroom management, special education needs, and trauma-informed practices—skills that are developed through comprehensive training and sustained practice.

Shortened certification timelines may place underprepared teachers in classrooms, increasing burnout and turnover while negatively impacting student learning and stability. This is especially concerning for students with disabilities, learning differences, or behavioral needs, who rely on well-trained, consistent educators to support their growth and success.

Rather than shortening certification requirements, I believe efforts should focus on strengthening teacher preparation programs, providing high-quality mentoring for new teachers, and improving working conditions and support systems that encourage long-term retention. Protecting the quality of teacher preparation ultimately protects the quality of education our students receive



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: KAILEY DIETRICH		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/17/2026 5:15 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

I am a teacher myself and am in the trenches everyday. This field is in dire need of **QUALITY** teachers and can already see the direct effect of what not having that does to children (I.e allowing people with no certification to teach with absolutely no experience). Reading and math scores are already low, people with no certification are already making the same as certified which is already insulting enough. Society already sees our profession as a joke. How can we ask parents to trust us to teach their children without the proper education to do so on top of already not having proper support from them to begin with and then dealing with schools not handling behaviors with consequences which contributes to us having to put out constant fires? Instead of trying to get quantity instead of quality maybe the solution could be looking into **WHY** teachers are leaving and giving them a more livable wage and have a zero tolerance for disruptive and violent students. You are going to open up the flood gates of losing quality teachers, even more so than what has already been happening, and seeing more home schooling happening due to lack or trust that allowing someone with an inappropriate amount of education for the profession can teach or has the passion to begin the classroom. This is going to make the disaster already happening even worse and make our profession even more of a laughing stock.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: KALEIGH PICKETT		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 10:51 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

Learning to teach and teaching effectively requires three components, a base layer of knowledge and competency, specific teaching pedagogy, and supervised practice with feedback. Missouri cannot risk lowering the bar for teacher certification, we need strong instructional leaders in classrooms. Programs that have developed a "middle ground" for example, Pathways for Paras at Missouri State University, have made coursework accessible and delivered in partnership with local school districts, and also allows pre-service teachers to work as paraeducators in schools as they are taking coursework allowing for daily supervised practice. We should look into innovative and alternative solutions like this instead of lowering the requirements for teaching certification.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: KAREN JEAN TERRILL		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 1/17/2026 7:31 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

Lowering the standards for the level of education and educator is required to complete is not going to improve our children's education. The last two years of a teaching degree are all of the classes that teach the methods of teaching. Without these classes most candidates will not be equipped to be a successful educator.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: KAREN SAFRANEK		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/17/2026 5:07 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

I don't feel an associates degrees is enough qualifications to teach full time. There is a lot of content to learn and strategies to develop in the last 2 years of acquiring a teacher certification that would be missed and disregarded if you allow this bill.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: KATELYNN HAWK		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/21/2026 5:04 PM

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"This is not the solution for a teacher shortage. Support teachers instead of making them the scapegoat for the current education system. Support teachers with wages that are higher than minimum wage when starting out. Support teachers with smaller class sizes, more time for preps, and decent budgets for supplies. This is how to fix the shortage. Allowing those who are less educated pushed faster in the classroom only contributes to the problem. Those who are more experienced will have to pick up the slack. Those who do not experience observations, practicum, or student teaching will have higher turnover. Our kids are not test dummies. We do not need those in the classroom who do not truly understand. Even with 5 yrs and that was full time, I still had a lot to learn. Please petition with your congressman if you feel the same." -Sarah Lutrell

I completely agree with this educator. Lowering certification standards isn't a fix, it's a shortcut that hurts kids, damages school systems, and leads to a less-prepared society.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: KATIE HARR		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/18/2026 7:46 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

I am a teacher myself, and am fully aware of the teacher shortage. However, reducing the time it takes to become a teacher is not going to help students or teachers alike. Those that would become teachers under this bill will not be prepared for what it is really like to become a teacher, leading to (in my opinion) quicker burnout. Additionally, students will not have access to highly informed individuals as teachers, especially in the high school setting. The standards set by teachers require highly trained individuals in their content area, and this bill simply would not meet those standards.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2776		DATE: 1/21/2026	
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: KATY SCHLESSELMAN		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 4:51 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

Teachers should be required to attend a full 4 year university and should be paid for student teaching. But student teaching required as well, not skipped. As a veteran teacher of 16 years, it is apparent that first year teachers struggle without true pedagogy training from an education degree. I oppose a 2 year associates degree being sufficient enough for a teaching degree.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2776		DATE: 1/21/2026
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: KELLY PATTERSON		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 2:41 PM

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

We wonder why teacher retention is rapidly going down. THIS is not a solution to the problem. Fix what is going on NOW versus trying to put a bandaid on it... it's going to bleed out and keep putting Missouri more behind in terms of quality education for our students. Are we just going to let those "half trained" teachers use AI to plan their lessons my 13 year old can create lessons for herself if that's the case.

Maybe try to give teachers a better incentive to teach in Missouri, like giving them government health insurance since a raise in pay doesn't seem like it is doable.

Signed,
 A 15 Year Veteran Teacher (who has taught in the same district her whole career)



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: KELLY PINGLETON		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 10:02 AM

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

Without several years of training and preparation, teachers would be entering the classroom under prepared and overwhelmed. Not to mention that it would allow 19/20 year old teachers to be in positions of authority over students very close to their age. This would create inappropriate relationships and open up the districts for potential lawsuits. With at least four years of education, the potential teachers are able to study not only the necessary information they will teach, but the theory behind HOW to teach. I am from a very small rural school district and many of our teachers were hired prior to their 4 year certification being completed. Many of those teachers have struggled, not with behaviors or attitudes (although that is also a concern for young teachers), but with being able to teach a specific topic in the varying ways that their students are able to learn. Teaching is not a one size fits all and with larger class sizes and more behavioral and learning challenges, knowing alternative methods of teaching is extremely important.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: KELLY R BRUNS		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/21/2026 11:50 AM	

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Having educators who are not properly educated will only make our schools worse.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: KELLY WHITFIELD		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 12:14 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

Our young people deserve more, as do our veteran teachers!



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: KENDRA GREENWALT		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/18/2026 10:48 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

As an educator of 19 years, how is this helping? Will my student loans for my Bachelor's and Master's Degree be reimbursed? As a certified and tenured teacher, will I get a big raise for having higher education and several years of experience over these new "teachers?" I see several non-certified teachers get hired in my district and they make the same pay as the certified teachers. Why? Several of them don't stick around- they end up leaving after a year or two, or even mid-year since they are hired on as "at will" employees, which leaves us short of teachers once again. How's this helping the long-term shortage? Lowering standards isn't attracting long-term quality educators. The problem is bigger. You risk the potential of losing your educators that have stuck around if you pass this. We're fed up and barely hanging on as it is. This will be the nail in the coffin for a portion of us. Please do not pass this.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: KIM CARNELL		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 8:34 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

I oppose this bill because it lowers the professional standards required to educate our children. Teaching is a complex profession that demands deep content knowledge, pedagogical training, and extensive supervised practice—preparation that an associate’s degree alone does not provide. Our students deserve educators who are fully prepared to meet academic, social, and emotional needs in today’s classrooms.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: KIMBERLY RAPP		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 1:11 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

Please protect our students as well as our society. As a retired teacher, working full time in public education, I can see this as catastrophic.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: KIRSTIN WHORTON		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/18/2026 7:59 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

Allowing someone to become a fully certified teacher after just two years of college is not going to help the education system at all, it is only going to hurt it. If you want to improve quality education for everyone, start out by paying teachers a decent livable salary. Now, teachers do not make enough to live comfortably. They have to get second, sometimes third jobs to support their family. Someone who has their Bachelor's or Master's Degree should not have to work multiple jobs just to pay their bills! This leads to burnout and teachers leaving the profession because they learn they can make more money as a waitress or bartender. Another way to improve quality education for everyone is to have students, who are thinking of becoming teachers, job shadow in a school before starting their bachelor's degree program. By job shadowing a teacher, they'll get to see all sides of the job and have a better idea if they want to pursue teaching full-time or not. By doing this, you will get educators who are fully committed to the job from the beginning. Lastly, teachers need to be treated like the professionals they are. Most teachers that I know personally, have their Master's Degree, and some even their Doctorate Degree in education. Allowing someone with an Associate's Degree to become a teacher making roughly the same salary would be a huge slap in the face to those who have worked hard getting their advanced degrees. Do not allow someone who is not educated themselves educate our future generations. Thank you.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2776		DATE: 1/21/2026	
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: LACEY REYNOLDS		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 12:00 PM	

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

My name is Lacey Reynolds. I am a certified teacher in exceptional child education I completed a four year program at Southeast Missouri State University in additionally another year towards my masters. I no longer hold my certification as I let it lapse because I left the education field within my first five years. The last class I took in my masters program before I left I wrote a paper on Missouri and it's teacher retention and attrition. That was five years ago and I'm sure the numbers are even more alarming. I sent a survey to the school I worked at and more than half the teachers responded that they did not see themselves staying in education many of them, tenure teachers. I completed the survey at one of the most sought after in well paid schools at the time. I think the problem is multifaceted, primarily that Missouri is one of the lowest paying teacher salaries in the United States. There are many qualified and certified men and women who would love to teach. That was the goal of their heart, but unfortunately it does not pay a livable wage and more often than not that unlivable wage comes with extra duties and responsibilities that go unpaid. The current economic state does not lend itself to below average wages. And you can't pay your bills on what makes your heart happy. So the idea of allowing anyone with a two year to agree to teach children with no knowledge of pedagogy or even a very basic intro to teaching class adds insult to injury. As someone who took those classes and more and have the knowledge in the skill to teach children, but choose not to because it leaves me unable to support my family, this bill is disappointing and disheartening to say the least. This suggested legislation shows zero regard for quality education in Missouri, as well as lack of regard for teachers currently in service. If anything, I think the passing of this legislation will cause more teachers to leave the field because someone who has a two-year degree, no experience, and no pedagogy could potentially make the same money they do which is dismal to begin with. Why can't we just pay teachers what they're worth please stop trying to pass Band-Aid bills for bullet hole problems.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: LACY BURGIN		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/18/2026 10:22 AM

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

Only needing an Associates degree to teach full time is insanity. Kids graduating with a teaching degree and NO classroom experience is ridiculous. Our school system is already flawed, we do NOT need to add to the problems. To have a SUBSTITUTE certification would be acceptable, but NOT a full teaching degree. I feel if this passes, majority of parents will choose private schools or homeschooling instead. I know I do not want an inexperienced person with no classroom experience teaching my children. I spent a few years obtaining my Associates then Bachelor's degrees and an unpaid semester student teaching. To eliminate this will cause the already certified teachers to leave the profession. I feel passing this bill will be a huge downfall to our public school system.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: LARI JEAN HARDIN		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 9:05 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

Two years of college is not enough preparation for a teacher to be ready for the needs, demands, and requirements of today's student in the classroom.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: LATOSHA MULHALL		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/17/2026 10:40 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

Teaching is such an important job as we are teaching the youth of our country. Teachers should have adequate education that also allows time in a classroom to observe. They need to know how to make lesson plans, juggle a schedule, effectively communicate in the workplace and to families. They need to learn the science behind engagement and what that looks like. They need to be able to handle stressful situations, and know how to handle the social emotional aspects to a student. If a students basic needs are not met, they are not able to learn what is being taught. Teaching has always being a respected position. Even though, the pay has not reflected the respect. As time has gone on, less people want to teach. That means there is a problem and it is not being delt with. It doesn't mean we should cut the education needed to be a certified teacher in half so we can get more teachers. That means you are going to throw people into teaching that are not actually ready, and expect a society of sophisticated and/or literate people. You are putting a band-aid on a bullet hole. The problems are still there, and shrinking the expectations to become a teacher doesnt deal with the root of the problem.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: LAUREN GOALDER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 7:16 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

As an educator, this proposed bill is highly offensive to the teaching profession. If anything, teachers need more quality training, not half of their current training and education. This will create even more of a burden on the school system by requiring more supervision and education from individual school districts. Anyone in support of this bill clearly wants to see failure in the public education system.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: LAURIE PAINTER		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 11:21 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

I am a 26 year educator veteran! I have been in the classroom and in the administration office. Teaching is a passion for almost all teachers. We do not do it for the paycheck or the gratitude of kids, parents or our ungrateful government but for the fact that we are the people teaching the leaders of tomorrow. For our government to think that lowering the standards to become a teacher will help with the teacher shortage crisis is just as crazy as saying that our government should have control over how we raise our kids! We, as educators have been trained the not only help students to read, write and do math but to grow into good humans. This takes training just like becoming a doctor. We need to increase the standards, not decrease them. I'm lease vote no on this bill!!



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: LEA HICKERSON		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/17/2026 10:02 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

Teaching requires pedagogy, content knowledge, and problem solving that cannot be gleaned from a mere associates degree. Effective teaching and learning practices are essential for student success in our state, and teachers need education programs and student teaching experiences.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: LEIGH TRUMBORE		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/18/2026 9:01 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

There are enough problems facing public school education. I don't think adding teachers that have not had sufficient training to the mix is a good solution to solving any problem (other than warm bodies in a classroom).



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: LENA MENNING		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 7:25 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2776		DATE: 1/21/2026
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: LINDSEY BRANSON		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 6:35 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

As an educator for 12 years this bill is embarrassing and terrifying. I went to school for 4 years with 1 year of student teaching in a classroom. Then received my masters degree after teaching for a couple years. What you are proposing will not be producing quality educators for our future generations. Teaching is a "profession" and a craft that needs to be learned and then practiced before giving a person a classroom with students. We all know there is a need for educators but instead of adding people who are not qualified or lack the experience maybe raise pay and make it harder to become an educator rather than simplifying it. These educators are educating our future. Very disappointing this is even being discussed or proposed.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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BILL NUMBER: HB 2776		DATE: 1/21/2026	
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: LISA EVERHART		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 11:43 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

I'm not sure how to feel about this!

I know there is a teacher shortage and teachers are desperately needed.

So, that's at least one way to get more teachers on board - BUT - will it diminish the professionalism & expectations of the current teaching staff?

We worked hard for a PROFESSIONAL degree.

Many have student loans to still pay off for that 4 year (or 5 year/Master degree) sacrifice & commitment.

Those with a two year degree - and maybe no real desire to truly be in the classroom - will just join the profession with less commitment, less effort, less education, less preparation, less experience - and to have the right to be called a "teacher." For them, it will be a JOB - not a CAREER!

If this passes, I hope school boards will create/add a new pay scale for those new teachers with less education. They should not be on the same pay scale as a traditionally trained teacher/educator. And what else? What about professional development? What about teacher evaluations? And contracts? And requirements to teach special education? What about high school core subjects? There are MANY, MANY things to consider before changing a whole established system in education.

I sure hope it doesn't hurt the professional status or expectations of current teachers. But how can it not??? There's no other profession that I can think of where reducing educational standards/minimums happen just to be able to hire!

Plumbers?

Electricians?

Accountants?

Doctors?

Nurses?

NOPE!!!

Education MATTERS!

It's actually backwards - we need to make teaching MORE APPEALING - with MORE BENEFITS - and MORE PRESTIGE to draw in new recruits.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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BILL NUMBER: HB 2776		DATE: 1/21/2026	
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: LISA SCHUSTER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/18/2026 6:29 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

My thoughts are what if every profession starts to require less requirements, health, and otherwise? Lowering standards is not the way to improve education. Reducing extreme load and stress a teacher is supposed to carry would go a long way in helping retaining quality teachers. Of all the countries we look to for better education systems have longer requirements in place to certify educators. It's very sad that the people we are supposed to trust with the future of teaching are trying to eliminate the very education that qualifies to teach.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: LISA YOUNG		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 12:59 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: LORA ALEXANDER		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 10:03 PM

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

Being properly certified to be a teacher is important for several key reasons:

1. **Ensures quality education**
 Certification verifies that a teacher has the necessary knowledge of subject matter, teaching methods, classroom management, and child development. This helps ensure students receive accurate information and effective instruction.
2. **Protects student safety and well-being**
 Certified teachers are trained in ethics, professional standards, and often child safeguarding. This reduces risks and helps create a safe, supportive learning environment.
3. **Promotes professionalism and accountability**
 Certification sets clear standards for the profession. Teachers are accountable to educational authorities and must follow established codes of conduct and curriculum guidelines.
4. **Improves student learning outcomes**
 Research consistently shows that trained and certified teachers are more effective, leading to better student achievement and engagement.
5. **Ensures fairness and consistency in education systems**
 Certification helps maintain uniform teaching standards across schools and regions, so students receive comparable education regardless of where they study.
6. **Builds trust with parents and the community**
 Parents are more confident knowing their children are taught by qualified professionals who meet official requirements.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2776		DATE: 1/21/2026
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: LORI MASON		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/21/2026 10:42 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

Flooding the education system with young, inexperienced individuals is not the way to educate our children. To insure that our children graduate and become productive individuals in society, pay teachers a living wage, reward them for pursuing higher education and you'll see the turnover rate drop with the retain age of experienced teachers.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2776		DATE: 1/21/2026
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: LORIN BLACKBURN		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 8:38 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

**As a 12 year veteran teacher, it is of the utmost importance that we keep the value in fully training and educating the people we trust with the future of our society.
This bill would not only lessen the years of training but it also hurts the students and kids under that unqualified persons care.**



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: LYNDSEY ELLIOTT		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 12:39 PM

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

House Bill 2776 moves Missouri’s focus in the wrong direction by prioritizing short-term fixes instead of addressing the deeper, long standing challenges facing our workforce and communities. Rather than creating new mandates or restructuring systems without clear evidence of effectiveness, lawmakers should be concentrating on stabilizing what we already have. Policies that overlook the day to day realities of workers and organizations risk increasing turnover, burnout, and disruption. These are outcomes that ultimately harm families, employers, and the state’s economy. Putting less experienced teachers into an already ill supported field is going to negatively impact students and our current exhausted educational field.

Missouri’s most urgent need is retention. Keeping experienced, qualified professionals requires meaningful investment in wages, benefits, working conditions, and support systems, not legislation that fails to address why people are leaving in the first place. Retention ensures continuity, quality, and trust, while constant turnover weakens programs and increases costs over time. Missouri is already one of the lowest paying states for education, which is likely a factor in educators leaving Missouri to teach elsewhere. Lowering the quality standards for teachers is not the answer to bettering our schools. For these reasons, HB 2776 should be opposed, and legislative efforts should instead be redirected toward policies that strengthen retention and sustain a stable, committed workforce across Missouri.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: MAEGAN LING		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 2:44 PM	

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

How about we fix what's wrong with the current teachers and their pay instead of focusing on doing half training for educators going into the teaching field this is only gonna make teacher retention worse and this isn't fixing any kind of problem.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: MARGARET ANDERSON		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 7:03 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

Lowering the standards required to obtain a teaching degree is only going to hurt the education of children. Children should be taught by adults who have spent more than 2 years learning how to educate someone. Lowering the standards might make it easier to fill teacher vacancies, but what good does it do to fill those vacancies with an undereducated and unprepared person? I would rather have my child's teacher have gone to college for 4 years instead of 2. Also, I believe sending teachers with only 2 years of college into a classroom will possibly create higher teacher turnover because they will not be fully prepared to handle a teaching position and will leave the profession.



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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: MARY BROWN		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 6:36 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

I don't agree with this bill at all! Would you want a physician treating you that has an associate's degree or a mechanic with half of his training left to service your vehicle, or an electrician to wire your home with half of his schooling to finish? This is just absurd!!! What in the world are you thinking? ??



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: MARY LIVINGSTON		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 12:25 PM	
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Let's cheapen the profession and give teachers less respect. Yeah, sounds like a great plan. Let's try term limits while we are at it.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: MARY WALTERS		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 10:43 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

Educators are one the foundation blocks of our country. We don't have musicians build a bridge. No we have engineers who have studied safety to do that. We don't have a guy flipping burgers perform brain surgeries, so why would we allow people who have not been properly educated to teach!! Educators need to be put back on a pedestal and paid like professionals they are. They need to be backed by admin and not be expected to be babysitters and worry about if the school will be sued cause the child was a disruption in class but parents think their kid is an angel. I know there is a need, but until teachers get the respect, support, and paid like they should, the shortage will continue.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: MAXWELL MEIGEL		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 9:05 PM	
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Missouri's students deserve teachers who are better prepared to help them than an associate's degree can accomplish. I acknowledge our shortage of qualified teachers, but the "qualified" part is the key. And addressing it shouldn't mean moving the goalposts.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: MEGAN JANSKY		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 8:05 AM	

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No, our teachers need atleast a bachelors degree in education. Our students deserve this.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: MELANIE BEHRENS		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/18/2026 10:10 PM	

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

As a full time teacher for the past nine years, I know that lowering our standards is never best for our students. In the past four years I have seen the standard slipping due to the lack of interest in the education field. I have worked with many teachers who are not fully certified - while these people usually have the right intentions, they are often working from a deficit, which leaves the rest of us to toe the line. Often, these people become overwhelmed with teaching while pursuing their certification and they quit, leaving their district back at square one. Sometimes these people even have a full bachelors degree in their content area, but still struggle with the education aspect. What most people do not understand is that getting an education degree is almost like "double majoring." It is imperative to spend equal time learning the content and learning how to teach the content. I do not see how both of those things can be adequately accomplished in two years. Additionally, education is an extremely difficult field to be in right now. If you have new teachers who have only spent two years of their life (less time than what it takes to get a high school diploma!) working towards this career, you will continue to see high rates of turn over as they realize that those two years aren't worth the trouble. Very honestly, I saw classmates in college dropping their courses well after the two year mark because they realized that education wasn't for them. I am very aware that we have a teacher shortage issue right now, but this is not the solution to that problem. This will only perpetuate the problem.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: MELISSA JOHNSON		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/18/2026 1:56 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

As a teacher who has a bachelors and masters degree, spent 6 years in college and paid off over \$ 60,000 for my student loans, this is a slap in the face. It also creates an environment where teaching is made to be less than a professional degree. How about instead of putting unprepared people in the classroom and cheapening our career, you address the real problem of teacher retention. Student behavior and pay us what we are worth. I easily work 60 hours a week and make less than my husband who works 40 hours a week with no degree in a factory and I have a masters degree. That is sad.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: MELODY NELSON		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 5:17 AM	
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We cannot lower the standards, if we expect there to be quality individuals teaching our students!



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: MELODY SIEBENECK		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/18/2026 6:11 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

This is absolutely disheartening. Our new teachers need experience in classrooms, experience in schools, experience as responsible adults. Stop lowering expectations for our profession. If you want to increase the number of certified educators, pay teachers like professionals.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: MICHAEL DREYER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/21/2026 9:20 PM	

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

As a Missourian, I stand in opposition to HB 2776. While I appreciate the intent to address teacher shortages, this bill dangerously lowers standards for one of our most vital professions. It creates a tiered system where students in underfunded districts, disproportionately serving low-income and minority communities, will be taught by educators with only an associate's degree and temporary authorization. This is an unacceptable equity issue. Our students, especially those facing systemic barriers, deserve fully prepared professionals with deep pedagogical training, not the least qualified teachers we can legally place in classrooms.

This bill exploits the very real crisis of underpayment and poor working conditions by offering a cheap, fast-track alternative instead of funding competitive salaries, reducing class sizes, and supporting existing teachers. It frames teaching not as a complex profession requiring expert knowledge in child development, curriculum design, and inclusive practices, but as a technical skill that can be acquired in a two-year program.

The "temporary authorization" creates a perilous loophole, allowing individuals to serve as full teachers for two years with minimal preparation. The proposed path to full licensure relies heavily on evaluation systems that are often flawed and subjective, rather than guaranteeing rigorous, standardized professional expertise.

We must solve the teacher shortage by respecting and investing in the profession, not by dismantling licensure standards. I urge you to reject HB 2776 and instead pursue real solutions: significant raises for educators, student loan forgiveness, and increased funding for high-quality, university-based teacher preparation programs that ensure every Missouri child has a well-qualified teacher.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: MICHELE COOPER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 10:29 AM	

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

Teaching is not a skill that can be mastered through shortcuts; it requires deep content knowledge, extensive pedagogical training, and meaningful hands-on classroom experience. Candidates entering the profession through these accelerated or alternate pathways often lack adequate preparation in special education, behavior management, and differentiated instruction, all of which are essential for meeting the diverse needs of today's classrooms. Without proper training and supervised experience, these teachers are set up to struggle, and students are the ones who pay the price. Lowering certification standards sends the message that teaching is an easy job anyone can do, which devalues the profession, disrespects highly trained educators, and ultimately weakens the quality of education our students deserve.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: MICHELE HUNOLT		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/18/2026 4:01 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

I'm a college instructor teaching students who are working on their 2 year degrees, and can fully attest the majority of my students are not prepared to be a fully certified teacher after 64 credit hours. I've spent 19 years working in education and I fully oppose this bill. This will not address the teacher shortage. It will create unqualified classroom teachers with little education or classroom management. Try addressing the real problem! Provide 0 to no interest loans as an incentive, look to funding school districts appropriately with decent teacher salaries and stop creating more demands on classroom teachers. If you're considering less class time, then look at a program that gives 2 years in a college seat and at least 1 to 2 full years of student teaching. I'm embarrassed and ashamed to live in Missouri these days! The ideas presented by our legislators are not fixing anything, rather making a broken system worse.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: MICHELLE WHITACRE		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/21/2026 2:06 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

As a teacher educator preparing Missouri's future educators, I respectfully oppose House Bill 2776 (LR 5998H.011). While addressing the teacher shortage is a critical goal, this bill weakens professional preparation standards by expanding pathways to full certification without sufficient requirements for supervised clinical practice and research-based coursework. Teaching is complex work that requires more than content knowledge or short-term training modules. Reducing preparation expectations risks placing underprepared teachers in high-need classrooms, increasing turnover, and negatively impacting student outcomes. Missouri's students deserve well-prepared, supported educators. Rather than lowering standards, the General Assembly should invest in high-quality preparation models, mentoring, and retention strategies that strengthen the profession while responsibly addressing workforce needs.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: MITZIE PENNYCUICK		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/17/2026 6:14 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

I worked very hard for my BS degree along with countless hours observing and subbing. I went on and received my Masters in Education also. I feel this is mocking my degrees and also sending in teachers that lack knowledge of content and classroom discipline. 25 years in public schools and retiring at the end of 2026 school years. Respect those who came before, two year degrees will not solve the teacher shortage!



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: MONTE MOON		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 4:35 PM
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MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: NADJA GARDNER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/18/2026 10:12 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

Teaching already takes a bad rap. If this happens - the position is no more than a babysitting job. We need individuals who understand the theories behind teaching- with in depth classes for all four years of college. Teachers also can't be 20 years old teaching seniors in high school.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: NATASHA JENKINS		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 1:33 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

Teaching is a professional career. Associate's Degree's are great for individuals, however, typically reach general education requirements with a handful of teaching classes. By allowing those with an Associate's Degree to receive a teaching certification, it does a great disservice to those who have completed their Bachelor's, went through unpaid internships, and taken the required certification tests. This is a sad fix to the teacher shortage when there are other ways to better support our current educators and promote the educational field to future students. I implore you to not allow for those receiving an Associate's Degree to also receive or be eligible for a teaching certification.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: PAITON DOTHAGE		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 6:30 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

We need educators that are knowledgeable and specialized in specific subjects. Supporting and passing this bill will only further the educational divide between the younger generations and give more reason to not incentivize the educators we already have - those who have spent years dedicating their lives to the education of our future leaders. Teachers aren't able to afford their own classroom supplies and resort to the public for help, all to give our children the best education possible. Increase funding for teacher pay and you'll see an increase in appeal in the job market. Our educators aren't underpaid and can't meet ends meet. They can't buy pencils for children who can't afford them themselves. Broadening the certifications required will not fix this, only paying teachers what they deserve will.



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TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: PAM MOON		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 1:02 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2776		DATE: 1/21/2026	
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: PAUL WAGNER		PHONE NUMBER: 529-7195	
REPRESENTING: COUNCIL ON PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: 717 WESTPORT DRIVE			
CITY: COLUMBIA		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65203
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 1/21/2026 12:00 AM	

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MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2776		DATE: 1/21/2026
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: RACHEL RATIGAN		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 3:52 PM

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Educating children is one of the most important jobs. Allowing teachers to become certified in just 2 years skips crucial teaching points. If a teacher hasn't been sufficiently educated, can they really go on to teach the nation's children?



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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BILL NUMBER: HB 2776		DATE: 1/21/2026
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: RAYMOND OLDSEN		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 7:16 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

Teachers need a full education. My sisters, sister in law, and daughter as well as many other relatives were or are teachers and all would agree with my feelings. I understand there is a shortage of teachers but putting people in the classroom that are not properly and full educated to teach is an injustice to students.

There is also a shortage of law enforcement officers, would the legislature even consider reducing those requirements? I hope not.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: ROYALYN ROLFS		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/18/2026 11:13 AM
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As a teacher with 19 years of experience, I think this is a terrible idea. How much credibility will these high school teachers have in the classroom?



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: RUBY JAYNE COLLINS		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/18/2026 3:13 PM	

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all the short cuts they are taking is hurting education. Many skip student teaching and that is where I learned to take constructive criticism and how to run a classroom...



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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BILL NUMBER: HB 2776		DATE: 1/21/2026	
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: SARAH BERRY		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 9:49 AM	

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I oppose HB 2776 because it lowers professional entry standards for individuals entrusted with the care, supervision, and instruction of children, thereby increasing legal liability and classroom risk for students, schools, and the state.

Teachers are not merely content deliverers; they are mandated reporters, daily authority figures, and custodians of student safety, privacy, and constitutional rights.

Expanding alternative certification without correspondingly stricter personal vetting, training, and demonstrated competency exposes districts to foreseeable harm, including inadequate classroom management, improper handling of vulnerable students, failures in mandatory reporting, and increased civil liability for negligence or rights violations.

At a time when schools face heightened legal scrutiny and complex student needs, Missouri should be strengthening—not diluting—professional qualifications, emphasizing rigorous preparation, ethical screening, and accountability standards.

If the goal is stability and safety in education, policy should prioritize higher personal responsibility, clearer competency benchmarks, and stronger safeguards for children rather than accelerating access to classrooms without sufficient protective requirements.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: SARAH JARRELL		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 9:49 PM	
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The answer to the teacher shortage is not to place untrained, uneducated (AA is not the same as a bachelors degree) unprepared individuals in the classroom. This is not what is best for students. Students need teachers that have been trained and are prepared on day one.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: SARAH LUTTRELL		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:	STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/21/2026 7:03 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

As a teacher of 13 years in the K-12 system, I cannot condone this bill. I am volunteer leader in my professional development community. I am also pursuing a Doctorate in Education. Finally, I lead in my district on several committees. Teaching is my passion.

This is not the solution to the teacher shortage. Teachers should be supported—not made scapegoats for the failures of the current education system. Support teachers with starting wages that are higher than minimum wage. Support them with smaller class sizes, adequate planning time, and reasonable budgets for classroom supplies. This is how you fix the shortage. Bring back support, and you will attract more teachers. Lowering standards only creates more problems—for the teachers currently in classrooms and for students.

Allowing less-prepared individuals to be rushed into classrooms only worsens the problem. Experienced teachers will inevitably be forced to pick up the slack. Those who enter the classroom without proper observations, practicum experience, or student teaching are far more likely to leave the profession quickly. Our students are not test dummies. They deserve educators who truly understand teaching and learning.

Even after five years to receive my Bachelors degree, I still had a great deal to learn. Education programs are being cut due to low enrollment because the next generation no longer sees teaching as an honorable or sustainable profession. I entered teaching out of a love for education, but also because it was once viewed as a respected career.

Teaching before COVID was different and, in many ways, easier. Since then, attendance has declined with little accountability. Budget cuts have reduced staff and resources. Online options have made it easier for students to disengage from school entirely.

Provisional early-entry pathways for teachers are, at best, a temporary bandage on a much larger issue. What is being proposed would create serious problems for the state of Missouri—a state I am proud to teach in. Please do not make it harder for those who have dedicated their lives to this profession.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: SHAUNA PITTS		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/17/2026 6:04 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo. Missouri		



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2776		DATE: 1/21/2026
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: SHAWANNA DANIELS		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/17/2026 6:51 PM
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Our education system is weak. There is nothing in this plan that makes it stronger. Why would you want to put a plan in place that is set up for failure?!



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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BILL NUMBER: HB 2776		DATE: 1/21/2026
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: SHELLY HERITAGE-PAXSON		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 1:06 PM

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

Our students deserve well-prepared, highly qualified educators. Teacher preparation should not be rushed or skimped on, and lowering standards is not the answer.

I'm not aware of any high-performing school systems that lowered teacher preparation standards and saw better outcomes. The ones that succeed actually raise the bar.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: STACEY BAHNER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 9:37 AM	

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

Teaching is not just a job—it is a calling that shapes the minds, hearts, and futures of our children. Allowing individuals to become teachers with only an associate degree is a shortcut that threatens the very foundation of education.

First and foremost, an associate degree simply does not provide the depth of knowledge required to teach effectively. Teachers must have a solid understanding of their subject matter to explain concepts clearly, answer complex questions, and inspire curiosity. Without this, students are left with gaps in their understanding that can affect their academic growth for years.

Equally important is pedagogical training—the art and science of teaching. Learning how to manage a classroom, design effective lessons, and understand child development cannot be condensed into a two-year program. Teachers with insufficient training may struggle to meet the diverse needs of their students, leaving some children behind.

Allowing underqualified teachers also undermines the professionalism and credibility of the field. Teaching deserves respect, but standards matter. Lowering requirements sends the message that teaching is “easy” or “anyone can do it,” which is simply false and harmful. Communities and parents deserve confident, competent educators who have invested in their craft.

The stakes are too high. Teachers influence the next generation’s knowledge, critical thinking, and character. Research shows that well-prepared teachers lead to higher student achievement. Conversely, poorly prepared teachers can unintentionally widen learning gaps and hinder lifelong learning.

Finally, the career path of a teacher should encourage growth, not stagnation. A bachelor’s degree or higher opens doors for advanced certifications, specialization, and leadership roles. An associate degree alone limits professional development and diminishes the potential for excellence in education. In short, teaching with only an associate degree is a dangerous shortcut with consequences that ripple far beyond the classroom. Our children, our schools, and our society deserve educators who are knowledgeable, trained, and prepared to guide the leaders of tomorrow. Lowering standards is not the solution—investing in teacher education is.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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BILL NUMBER: HB 2776		DATE: 1/21/2026	
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: STACEY BARNES		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/17/2026 6:57 PM	

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As a teacher of 19 years, one with a four-year bachelors degree, and a two-year masters in administration degree, I find this proposal absolutely disgraceful. Veteran teachers are barely making a couple thousand dollars more than teachers currently entering the field. If you truly want to help in education, pay teachers better. Reward veteran teachers for putting in the time and work. Do not dumb down this profession by offering those with a 2 year degree, barely out of high school, the same certification that those like me, worked our butts off for, for 6 years. I understand the teacher shortage, but giving teaching degrees away without being completely trained through a complete education is not the way to obtain high quality teachers. Say no to this proposal. You want quality teachers, start paying us what we deserve and teachers won't be leaving by the hundreds. Also I 19-20 year old has no business teaching in a high school with students they could have potentially dated while enrolled. This entire proposal is ludicrous.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: STACY HAYNES		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/17/2026 6:50 PM
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Teachers should go thru extensive training in how to teach their specific subject or age group. They also need classroom experience like field experience and student teaching which is now required. They don't need to learn how to write extensive lessons plans. They need experience with other teachers with students. An associate degree does NOT get they education they need to teach.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: STACY WITTENAUER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/21/2026 5:15 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

I am writing to express my strong opposition to ****HB 2776****, which alters the pathway for obtaining a professional teaching certificate in Missouri.

I bring this perspective as a retired public school teacher with years of classroom experience and as a current faculty member in a university teacher preparation program. I have spent my career both teaching children and preparing future educators, and I am deeply concerned about the long-term impact this legislation could have on students, schools, and the teaching profession.

While I understand the intent of HB 2776 is to address teacher shortages, lowering the standards for professional licensure is not a solution that serves students or strengthens education. This bill allows individuals to move from temporary authorization to full certification without completing a comprehensive educator preparation program. Experience and mentoring are important, but they cannot replace systematic training in pedagogy, child development, assessment, classroom management, literacy instruction, and special education law.

In my work preparing future teachers, I see firsthand how essential structured coursework and supervised clinical practice are to developing effective educators. Teaching is not simply content delivery; it is a complex profession that requires deep understanding of how students learn, how to support diverse learners, and how to make instructional decisions that directly impact student outcomes. Weakening licensure requirements risks placing underprepared teachers in classrooms, particularly in high-need schools where students deserve the strongest instruction.

Additionally, HB 2776 sends a troubling message about the value of the teaching profession. Teachers who complete rigorous preparation programs invest significant time, money, and effort to meet certification standards. Policies that reduce those standards devalue the profession, discourage future candidates from pursuing teaching as a respected career, and may worsen retention by setting new teachers up for failure rather than success.

Teacher shortages should be addressed through competitive pay, strong mentoring, supportive working conditions, and investment in high-quality preparation programs—not by lowering the bar for professional licensure. Short-term fixes that compromise preparation will lead to long-term consequences for student achievement and educator stability.

For these reasons, I urge you to oppose HB 2776 and instead support policies that strengthen teacher preparation, uphold professional standards, and prioritize the educational outcomes of Missouri's

students.

Thank you for your time and for considering the perspective of educators who have dedicated their lives to this profession.

Respectfully,

Stacy Wittenauer



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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BILL NUMBER: HB 2776		DATE: 1/21/2026
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: STEPHANIE CLARK		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 5:17 PM

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I believe this legislation is an attempt to address the teacher shortage in Missouri, which is needed. However, this bill, as written and at its heart, will not improve the teacher recruitment/retention issue. I say this with the experience of first-hand preparing our future educators as this is my profession and career.

While the intent may be well-meaning, lowering standards and requirements of our educators will further erode the profession. Education and teaching are not equivalent to vocational schools/careers. Foundational coursework, along with basic general education knowledge, time in the classroom through practicums and student-teaching must not be reduced to a few courses. The bill does not identify any exceptions for the certification areas. This does not make sense in practice as the needed course work, whether that be for Elementary Education or a Secondary content area ranges from 30 to 50 college credit hours. These are state requirements. A recent high school graduate with a few college courses will not have the needed knowledge, skill, ability, or experience to be the sole teacher in a classroom.

Research shows that this reduction of the standards for teacher certification will compromise the quality of instruction, continue to increase teacher instability, and widen educational inequities across the state.

An associate's degree does not provide the foundational knowledge, skills, or practical experiences to prepare teacher candidates with the foundational knowledge in pedagogy, child development, and classroom management, which are critical for effective learning. Most associate degrees, even programs labeled as associates of teaching, only require 3 courses in education.

Research shows this will lead to declining student achievement:

- **Lower Test Scores:** Research shows that students of alternatively certified teachers produce lower scores in core subjects like math and English Language Arts (ELA) compared to those taught by traditionally certified teachers.
- **Specific Group Impact:** The negative impact is more pronounced for vulnerable groups. For example, English Learners (ELs) show significantly lower reading and math scores in states that only require basic certification tests rather than comprehensive coursework.

Increased Teacher Attrition & Instability:

- **Higher Turnover Rates:** Research shows that alternatively certified teachers are significantly more likely to leave the profession within five years than their certified peers (30% versus 15%).
- **Loss of Relationship Building:** Frequent teacher turnover prevents the formation of stable, nurturing relationships, which are essential for student emotional regulation and academic engagement.

Cumulating Effects of Educational Inequality:

Marginalized Communities: Schools serving high concentrations of minorities and low-income

students are four times more likely to be staffed by alternative or uncertified teachers.

Widening Achievement Gaps: High-quality, university-certified teachers can offset up to half of the academic disadvantage associated with living in poverty. Removing these standards removes a vital safeguard for these students.

Considering many high school students take dual credit/AP courses, high schoolers are now graduating with enough credits to be considered at or near sophomore level. This bill, as written, would feasibly open the door to have an 18-19 year old be the classroom teacher of senior high school students. This is a recipe for disaster.

The bill, as written, contains outdated information, such as line 144: the Missouri General Education Assessment (MEGA) is no longer in use.

Missouri has a teacher retention problem. Providing resources and incentives, as well as fostering building and district support of teachers and their profession, have proven to be effective. I urge the committee to focus on avenues that elevate the profession back to a desired career, one that is respected and FUNDED, rather than policies that further diminish the quality of education throughout the State.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: STEPHANIE NEVELS		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/18/2026 4:55 PM	
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This bill would put underprepared teachers in the classrooms, who are responsible for educating America's next generation. Instead of making it easier for people to become teachers, the real issues should be addressed and fixed. Teachers do not make adequate pay for their degree level/experience/responsibilities, they have some of the worst health care, and are expected to juggle too many responsibilities. Today's students are unique, and not in a good way. Instead of simply teaching curriculum, teachers are to be counselors, behavior management specialists, and social workers. Throwing someone in the classroom with an associates degree is irresponsible and insulting to those who are currently teaching with bachelors and masters degrees.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: SUE FLYNN		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 2:55 PM	
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This is not a solution. Teachers need to be educated not only in the subject they teach but also in psychology, child behavior, communication skills, and more.



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TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: SUSIE HOWE		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 8:21 PM
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Teaching requires more than just 2 years of training!



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: SYDNEY APPLEBERRY		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 8:46 PM	
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this is dumb. i should not be able to teach as a 19 year old about to have an associates for the same pay as my mom with a masters



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: TALIA MORELAND		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/18/2026 9:51 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

This is a horrible idea and a lot of students now do dual credit and sometimes graduate high school with associates degrees (this would allow students straight of high school to step into classrooms full time when they aren't ready to). Additionally, this completely undermines teachers who have pushed and worked through their college years and careers for further education. And pushing for better teacher pay this will take away from that because we are lowering the certification bar, people will say pay doesn't need to increase which is a huge problem!



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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BILL NUMBER: HB 2776		DATE: 1/21/2026
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: TAMMY HEINEY		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/17/2026 5:34 PM
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Minimizing what a teacher needs to know and do will not improve education. We need teachers educated in classroom management, research based strategies, and professionalism. Do not minimize the importance of teachers with this rbill.



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TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: TARA BRACKMAN		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 1/21/2026 7:38 PM
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This is simply absurd thought. Educators are professionals and should have a 4 year college teaching degree. No one can get the necessary tools and content from 2 years of junior college. Impossible!



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: TASHA REEVES		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/21/2026 11:25 AM

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Kids that age are too young to be teaching teenagers. With only a two year age difference, we are asking for trouble.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: TEARSTEN KEISTER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/18/2026 12:01 PM	
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We're already lacking the staff these school need to function. This bill will just make that problem worse. There are bigger problems within the system that should be focused on more.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: TERRA WHEELER		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/17/2026 2:00 PM
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As an educator who has been through university and taught in an elementary classroom for 5 years and now working as a para in a self contain room, I do not agree. Teachers need more than an associates degree and definitely more than 2 years experience to be ready for the classroom. Educators need practice lesson planning, need to know their standards, need longer student teacher experience, need more classes with special education, more classes with classroom management, and more, rather than decreasing the quality of education our teachers get.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: TESSA CHILDERS		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 4:43 PM
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Lowering the criteria of teachers will do nothing but lower the public education system. I have been a public school educator for 15 years and proudly send my own children to public school. But if the criteria is lowered to an associates degree, the level of teaching will also lower. Teaching is and should be treated like the esteem profession it is; and therefore should held to a higher standard to most professions not lower.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: THOMASON MARGO		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 8:37 PM
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The more you continue to decrease requirements to teach, the worse teachers you will have in the school system. Teachers who spent years be coming certified are being treated as if their education and dedication were for nothing. Why don't you try to build up the profession instead of tearing it down?



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: VANCE KEATON		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/18/2026 8:41 AM
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I know that qualify teachers are hard to find but we can not educate the future students by lowering the standard to become a “teacher”. The real fix is making teacher education affordable and providing the teachers with the support in the classroom. This support is more than money it is support when dealing with issues from disruptive students and parents.
Please vote no on this bill



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: WENDY TURBOUGH		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 9:19 PM	

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This is the most absurd bill I've ever heard of being promoted. First of all, our schools are already JUNK! Yet, you expect us to send our children to these failing public schools, without the ability to utilize our own tax dollars for school choice as a voucher system. Teachers are already getting masters degrees and can't educate our Missouri children to read past a third grade level or balance a checkbook. Nonetheless, your hare brained idea is to insult the students even more and require certification to teach them. Let's just go ahead and send in high school drop outs in stead. They at least probably have some common sense. I cannot even believe this is being considered by our government. At the very least, IF this does pass, my local tax dollars should never again go to my local public school. I should have 100% choice of where that school tax money is utilized for my child, whether it be parochial schools or homeschooling. The people of the state of Missouri are sick and tired of being held hostage by the failing education system. I have my own Doctorate Degree. I was a Director of Special Education and would never let my own child set foot in a public school today. I have called numerous legislators- Ben Brown, Bruce Sassmann, Ann Wagner and Governor Kehoe myself. All of them several times demanding school vouchers for tax dollars to follow students and the seniors to not pay into the public schools for the degree of waste, fraud and abuse within them. Their Unions need to go! The last thing you need to do ... is frankly DUMB down their requirements any more. They literally do nothing now. If you allow this change ... then why have any requirements for any profession in the state? Why would the state give any funding to the higher education institutions because technically they are not important- that is what you are saying within this bill? So no more giving funding to that either right? Better yet cut all that funding to any educational institutions and have the actual parents pay to send their own child!!! Apply for federal aid in college and get scholarships. Save the state lots of money that way too. Stop funding all this crap. You have the kids - you pay for them. I pay \$12,000 a year for one son to attend Catholic School and all I'm asking is to transfer my \$3600 from Gasconade County R-2 school taxes to help pay the tuition. I'm not asking for the state allocated money from other taxpayers. Just my own hard earned money and no one cares about people like me. Why should my kid have to go to a failing school. They are never open. They give the teachers bonuses. The kids aren't learning anything, yet you punish me for wanting more for my kid and now let's allow them to steal my tax dollars and hire even less qualified people. WOW!



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: WYATT HENSLEY		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/19/2026 8:37 PM	

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Hello, my name is Wyatt Hensley and I'm 20 years old. When I graduated Joplin high school in Joplin, Missouri in May 2023, I also graduated from the crowd of college was an associates degree in general studies. This allowed me to graduate from Pittsburg State University with a Bachelor of Science in History Education and a minor in Political Science. I'm now a history teacher at Vinita High School, though still living in Missouri and plan on teaching in Missouri in the near future. As someone who graduated from college early and has begun my teaching career at 20 years old, I believe that only requiring an associates degree to become a teacher in Missouri is not the solution to solving the teacher shortage. The valuable and important information that I learned while working on my bachelors degree, is crucial for all teachers to learn and have the time to learn. Shortening the process of becoming certified, when not only disadvantage the teacher by not having time to learn and process the basics of becoming a teacher, but will also hinder the students and their learning as their teacher will not be as prepared to manage classroom, build lessons, create accommodations, etc. Also, speaking as a really young teacher myself, only requiring an associates hearing means that students graduate from high school ready for their student teaching, then teaching soon after. That is simply too young to start out teaching, especially for those who will be teaching high school. Again, I'm saying this is someone who is only 20 and teaching. Those couple years better allow for more maturing and for more learning of this complex and sometimes difficult profession. With that, I want to make my opposition to this bill known. I understand that this is a problem and am appreciative of those offering ideas to fix it, but this is not a solution. This will hurt both new teachers who will not be adequately prepared and to the students who need prepared teachers to educate them and foster a positive learning environment.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: AMBER HIXSON		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 10:16 AM
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The fact that this bill would allow for almost all students to begin teaching at the age of 19 & 20 is enough in itself to realize it should never pass.

Students who graduate HS as sophomores due to dual credit would only attend college one more year and begin teaching at age 19? And could potentially teach Middle School or Secondary Students only being slightly older and more mature than them. This is a recipe for disaster!



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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: CONOR NORRIS		PHONE NUMBER: 917-817-3024	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: KNEE REGULATORY RESEARCH CENTER		TITLE: DIRECTOR OF LABOR POLICY	
ADDRESS: 260 PRICE STREET			
CITY: MORGANTOWN		STATE: WV	ZIP: 26506
EMAIL: Joana.dasilvagonzalez@mail.wvu.edu	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2026 5:32 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

Chair McGaugh, Vice Chair West, Ranking Member Strickler, and all distinguished members of the House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony on the regulation of teachers in the state of Missouri. I am an Assistant Professor at West Virginia University and the Director of Labor Policy at the Knee Regulatory Research Center. I am also a Regulatory Policy Fellow with the Archbridge Institute. My comments are not submitted on behalf of any party or interest group.

My research focuses on the effects of occupational licensing laws on quality, supply, and wages. We use occupational licensing to protect consumers by ensuring that professionals are qualified. However, these well-intended regulations can make it difficult for aspiring professionals to enter professions and exacerbate existing shortages.

School districts across Missouri are facing staffing issues and struggling to retain teachers.¹ Over 3,000 critical positions in classrooms are vacant. In the face of these headwinds, it's important to make sure that the talent pipeline is open to attract new teachers.

Occupational licensing laws can close that pipeline when not designed well. Unnecessary requirements and rigid educational pathways can block entry into the profession for otherwise qualified workers. Economists find evidence that certain teacher licensing requirements can reduce entry into the profession.²

HB 2776 will relax barriers by allowing teachers with a temporary authorization certificate to transition to a full teaching certification. They still must gain experience in classrooms, engage in professional development, and pass licensing exams. It will help get more teachers in the door without sacrificing the quality of instruction for students.

Although teacher licensing laws are designed as a way to ensure students can receive the best

education possible, they can be costly for aspiring teachers and prevent otherwise qualified teachers from switching careers. Increasing flexibility and expanding pathways into the teaching profession will help ease the teacher shortage without harming students' learning.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: TANNER BURTON		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/16/2026 3:30 PM

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I am in favor of this bill and any bill that exapnds opportunities to expand access to quality teachers.

It should be considered that those with a 4 year degree should be able to take and pass any teaching certification test to become certified in specific content and take (classroom management, Intro to teaching, Psychology of exceptional children, maybe 1 additional course) to become certified.

**Tanner Burton
Superintendent
Higbee R-VIII School**