

SB 2070
Introduction to House Education Committee
David S. Rust, Senator District 2

Chairman Heinert, Vice-Chairman Schreiber-Beck and Members of the House Education Committee:

For the record I am Senator David Rust of District 2. I'm here to introduce SB 2070.

During the 2019 Legislative Session HB 1351 was passed that created a teaching "permit." It was the first time such a term was used in licensing or certifying teachers. And, it was to be issued in only non-core teaching areas.

Its intent was to give school boards the option to hire a "community expert" to teach if a qualified teacher couldn't be obtained.

HB 1351 was a stop-gap bill allowing a school board to hire someone for one year, up to a maximum of three years, if certain conditions were met.

It was never intended to be a permanent solution, and for good reason—students deserve to be taught by qualified, certified teachers. One of the fears of the passage of HB 1351 was that the quality of education and the resulting knowledge students would receive would be significantly diminished with this option.

A number of school districts have used teaching permits to temporarily fill a vacant teaching position. However, per the provisions of the bill, 15.1-18-10 sunsets on July 31, 2023.

SB 2070 does the following:

1. Extends the sunset to July 31, 2031. (See p. 1 line 7 and p. 2 line 22)
2. Adds a pathway for those who want to teach after those first four years. Those wishing to continue in the teaching profession may need more time to complete their teaching degree. Hence, P. 2 lines 16-18 adds the provision that “the board of a school district may authorize the individual to teach for an additional four years, up to a maximum seven years, if the individual also is enrolled in a teacher education program.”

I've asked Dr. Pitkin of the ESPB to come here today to provide you with information on the individuals and schools who have utilized teaching permits, to explain the bill further and to answer any questions you may have.

The bill has been a success as we already have individuals who have obtained a degree and are contracted to teach; we have individuals with a teaching permit who are in a program to become a teacher, and those who are in their first year.

It is definitely an option for school districts that are unable to presently fill a vacant position, giving them time to either find a qualified teacher or possibly have one for the future.

That concludes my testimony. I'll remain for a bit to answer any questions you may have.

Mr. Chairman.