

Chairman Heinert and Members of the North Dakota House Education Committee:

This letter is to voice **support** for HB 1238, which will change the number of years a teacher must serve before being granted a lifetime license in our state.

Two years ago, I wrote testimony in support for a similar bill.¹ At that time I noted that the millennial generation is shown to be more likely to “job-hop” with, “21% of millennials say[ing] they’ve changed jobs within the past year, which is more than three times the number of non-millennials who report the same.”²

I wrote about how this data helps illuminate the need for making the teacher licensure program both attractive to new teachers and alluring for existing teachers. I also shared my personal story of feeling the effects of the “job-hopping” generation. I noted that while I observed my similar-aged peers come and go, I also was having thoughts about pursuing other opportunities outside of education.

I argued in 2023 that for teachers like me, recognition from a bill like this may provide an incentive to remain employed in public education. Unfortunately, the 2023 legislature let me down. Seeing a lack of support from my legislators was one factor that contributed to me choosing to “job-hop”. As I began to get asked why I was leaving teaching, I found the question difficult to answer. Why was I choosing to leave a profession I love while still feeling called to serve students and teachers? After contemplation I determined that I left because I could no longer tolerate the conditions I was enduring, including the lack of support from the legislature. You see, it’s not so much that I left teaching, but rather that “teaching left me”. What I had been called to do: to teach, was no longer being supported by my elected officials. Public schools became hot springs for political warfare and my legislature couldn’t even pass a law to say that teachers who had been investing in our students for 20 years should be recognized as expert teachers. It was a disgusting rejection of the time, money, emotion, energy, and dedication I had given to invest in the future leaders of this state.

Today, I am certain there are other educators wondering something similar to what I was wondering in 2023: “Will my legislators pass a simple bill to demonstrate their support of my work?” The work of educators is challenging in many ways and the legislature, has often implemented legislation that has hampered public school teachers. In this bill though, you have a simple opportunity to not *hamper* but *help* educators.

This legislation is an act of goodwill toward some of our state’s most experienced teachers. If passed, this bill would provide recognition and serve as a milestone for many educators to work toward in their coming years.

Therefore, I urge the committee to issue a DO PASS recommendation on HB 1238.

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¹ https://ndlegis.gov/assembly/68-2023/testimony/HEDU-1329-20230131-17973-F-KRAFT_GRANT.pdf

² <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/231587/millennials-job-hopping-generation.aspx>