

Members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee,

I am Brenda Seehafer, an elementary Title I reading and math teacher from Rolla, ND. I am asking for your support on HB 1238, the Lifetime Teacher Licensure Bill.

I feel that it is time to allow teachers to obtain a lifetime license after twenty years of teaching in the state of North Dakota. Teaching is a profession that has been dwindling in numbers of people entering it over the last years. Not only aren't people going into the education profession, but then when they do enter it, they leave after short periods of time. This bill can help the issue of teacher retention as it would become an incentive for educators who want to continue their careers in North Dakota; this would help in the areas of recruitment and retention. Lowering the threshold of lifetime license to twenty years acknowledges the dedication and expertise of North Dakota educators by offering them well-deserved recognition earlier in their careers. Lifetime licensure after twenty years also reduces the burden of periodic renewals, enabling teachers to concentrate more on their students and less on administrative tasks; isn't that where we want the focus of our teachers to be, working with and preparing our students for a successful future? Teachers wear various hats and serve in many different roles daily with their students. They need to be given the recognition they deserve sooner, as this will show the importance of the teaching profession.

We have the Education Standards and Practices Board that would still retain the authority to take action against a lifetime license if necessary ensuring that professional standards are upheld. This Board ensures that professional standards are upheld by teachers, which would continue with this licensure change.

Please support HB 1238 by lowering a lifetime teacher license to twenty years to show your support of the dedication and expertise of North Dakota teachers. Help teachers recruit and retain fellow educators to this wonderful, fulfilling profession by recognizing them after twenty years in their careers with a lifetime license.