

Chairman Wobbema and Members of the North Dakota Senate Workforce Development Committee:

This letter is to voice support for HB 1329, which will change the number of years a teacher must serve before being granted a lifetime license in our state. Please note that I would have preferred to testify in person (or online) but as a currently employed teacher, I will be actively teaching students at the time of your hearing.

A Changing Workforce

According to Gallup, millennials (who Gallup defines to be born between 1980 and 1996) are more likely to “job-hop” or move from one organization or institution to another. According to the Gallup report, “21% of millennials say they’ve changed jobs within the past year, which is more than three times the number of non-millennials who report the same.”¹ The organization concludes that the data requires employers to consider both how they can attract millennial workers and how they can retain existing millennial employees.

Attracting and Retaining Millennials

This bill attempts to make the teacher licensure process more attractive to new teachers and more alluring to existing teachers. As a millennial teacher myself with eight years of teaching experience, I have experienced the dynamic impact of “job-hopping” firsthand. The past seven of my eight years of teaching have been in the same building. In those seven years at that building, I have worked with ten different colleagues coming and going in just my own department, which consists of me and three other teachers. By the time I entered my fourth year of teaching, I was the longest serving teacher in my department. I recently learned that two of my three current department colleagues, one a millennial, will be vacating their positions at the end of this school year. While observing my similar-aged peers come and go, I have also thought about pursuing other opportunities outside of education.

Awarding Longevity

For teachers like me, the kind of recognition this bill offers may provide an incentive to remain employed in this field. I could, if given the opportunity, explain the many ways this job is difficult. I could also explain the ways in which the legislature, although often with positive intent, has implemented legislation that has hampered public school teachers. 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 to work toward in my coming years.

Therefore, I urge the committee to issue a DO PASS recommendation on HB 1329.

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(This testimony is my own and may not be representative of the position of the Fargo School Board, Fargo Public Schools, or the Fargo Education Association.)

¹ <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/231587/millennials-job-hopping-generation.aspx>