

January 30, 2018

RE: HB 18-1095

TO: House Education Committee:

On behalf of myself and other military spouses stationed in Colorado, I submit this letter in support of HB 18-1095. This bill will effectively eliminate the one unreasonable requirement in the process of applying for and transferring licensure for Colorado educators. I and other spouses of our United States Military appreciate your time and attention and urge you to support this legislation.

According to the Department of Higher Education, in Colorado alone, graduates from teacher preparation programs declined 24.4 percent in the last five years. Also, one third of the teachers in Colorado are 55 or older and not far from considering retirement. With that shortage of teachers, it would benefit all school districts to have a method for allowing strong candidates to apply and be hired in a timely manner to fill positions needed with a highly qualified educator. Our military spouses can assist in filling this need and HB 18-1095 will help expedite that process. By reconsidering the three year of consecutive experience in one state prior to applying for licensure in Colorado, the state will open the hiring pool to additional highly qualified educators who have demonstrated successful teaching experience.

On a personal note, I believed that a teaching career would seamlessly merge with my active duty spouse's air force advancement. While I am in my twenty-fourth year of teaching, none of it has been seamless. I earned my initial professional license in Texas while completing my Master's Degree in Education. I was licensed and taught for two years in a Title-One school in San Antonio. When my husband was transferred to Youngson Garrison in Seoul Korea, I was able to teach at Seoul American High School with my credentials and an additional three classes I took during the summer before the start of the school year.

I then moved to Colorado. After demonstrating four years of being a highly qualified and highly effective teacher as documented by student test scores and teaching evaluations, Colorado would not accept my credentials in a reciprocal manner. I was hired as a probationary teacher on an initial license and was required to start the process for a professional license again. This process was predicted to last two years but my husband again was transferred, this time to Florida. While in Florida, I continued to work on my Colorado license and my Florida license concurrently. After 24 months, we moved again. This time, back to Colorado. Because I still did not have three years concurrent in any one state, there was no reciprocity. I did however, complete all the requirements to earn a professional license in the state of Colorado.

I have held teaching licenses in Texas, Department of Defense Dependent Schools, Virginia, California, Florida, Nebraska, and Colorado. I currently live in Colorado Springs and teach at Pine Creek High School. I plan to retire from my current position.

HB 18-1095 might not help me in my journey but it will help my educational brothers and sisters as they strive to make a difference in the lives of the young people they teach. Please consider the proposed bill to allow the highly qualified educators who are also military spouses teach in fill needed positions in education in the state of Colorado.

Respectfully,

Amy Wasson, M. Ed.