

## Testimony to the Vermont Senate Education Committee: Concerning Teacher Credentials and Teacher Licensing

Good afternoon,

My name is Barbara Brody, and I am the Executive Director of the Vermont Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association. I am also a licensed Driver Education Teacher through the Agency and Education and the Department of Motor Vehicles. I have been teaching in Vermont since 1979. During that time I have taught Driver Education in 3 different High Schools and at the Essex Center of Technology. I now work part-time with Youth Spectrum in Burlington teaching Driver Education to Students in the Foster Care System.

I have a master's degree in educational leadership, and I attended a Doctorate Program at the University of MN.

Having A Driver Education Teacher with proper professional Licensing is very important to our teens in this state. For many years now we have had protentional Driver Education Teachers take courses through Keene State College. They hired master's degree teachers who had a background in Driver and Traffic Safety.

When AOE had a consultant at the Department who had a Driver and Traffic Safety Background they took the

responsibility of conducting the Teacher Licensing Program first through University of Vermont, then Vermont College and then Castleton State Continuing Education Program. When the Department eliminated the consultant position the Higher Ed Group took over this responsibility. After that we decided that Keene State College's Traffic Safety Department would certify our Vermont Teachers at their in-state tuition. This worked out perfectly. Our teachers would take the courses and get certification through AOE and our private Driving Schools through DMV.

Recently, White Mountain Community College in NH has offered Driver Education Courses for licensing. They undercut tremendously the courses so much that Keene State as of January discontinued the Department.

White Mountain CC does not have any instructors with a Traffic Safety Background. They have each student buy a text book and have them read a chapter and write a paper, read a chapter and write a paper. For the behind-the-wheel course, they would send articles about teaching behind-the-wheel instruction, and have teachers write a paper about the article.

Recently several Vermont teachers took the courses from White Mountain CC and became employed by Vermont School Districts.

They notified the Vermont Driver and Traffic Safety Association that they were nervous about teaching the behind-the-wheel segment of Driver Education since they themselves were never taught in a vehicle. We got into action and matched these teachers with veteran teachers to retrain them in teaching the behind-the wheel phase of Driver Education.

This practice cannot continue. Once I was notified of this situation, I contacted the Chancellor of the Vermont State Colleges. She connected me with Patricia Moulton the Executive Director of the Vermont State Colleges Workforce Division. Patricia and leaders of the Driver Education Association had a zoom meeting and we explained the situation and discussed what we could do.

I recommended that we connect with Castleton Center for Schools where we once had the teacher licensing courses housed.

I thought two things. First let's keep the tuition money in the state. And second because there is a Driver Education

Teacher Shortage we should connect with Juniors and Seniors at the State Universities who are enrolled in a teacher prep program getting an endorsement in a subject matter and then take their electives in Driver and Traffic Safety. So, when they graduate, they would have an endorsement in their major subject and an endorsement in Driver Education. I know as a Former School Administrator in charge of hiring if I saw a resume of an applicant who had multiple endorsements they would get to the front of the pile for an interview.

The liability issue of having recently certified teachers from White Mountain Community College who are teaching the in-vehicle segment of Driver Education without the proper training is a collision waiting to happen.

It is important that not only AOE and DMV recognize institutions in our state that will provide the certification courses but that they discontinue recognizing White Mountain Community College and not certify teachers who attended that program. If not, White Mountain Community College will undercut our University system and we are back, were we started.

We will continue to work with Jayshree Bhat from the Vermont State University Workforce and Community and Economic Development Department and with Dr. Reardon, Director of Education and Castleton Center for Schools, to help solve this problem.

Thank you for your time.

Barbara E. Brody, M.Ed