

Dear House Committee on Education Members,

I recently read about bill, [H.79](#), sponsored by state representative Maida Townsend, (D) D-7 Chittenden, who requires a college level course in African American history before they could receive or renew a teaching license. I would like to express to you that I have outlined below.

1. I have held a teaching license in the state of MA since 1988 and Vermont since 2005. I have a level 2 certification and have been teaching students with language-based learning disabilities/dyslexia since 1990. To do this requires regular teacher certification.
2. I plan on renewing my Vermont teacher license in 2024 which requires me to do 90 hours of training in 5 years. I am currently certified in Vermont through 2029. I would like to be able to renew my certification and finish my teaching career.
3. I have used this time during the pandemic to complete the final 55 hours of specialized training I need to renew my certification. I completed courses in the areas of structured language instruction, written expression, executive function skills, and social skills at Landmark School in Beverly, MA. I took these online courses at night and on weekends after teaching all week. I also attended workshops and trainings from the Stern Center for Language and Learning in Williston, VT where I currently am completing my coursework in order to renew my Vermont teacher certification before I finally can retire.
4. I feel that requiring me to take a 3-credit course on top of all the specialized training I have already done is too much.
5. One suggestion I have is for the state to design a workshop/training course for teachers that could be held throughout the school year at their schools/places of work. We all have weekly meetings, so this could be an ongoing training rather than a college course, but rather ongoing training that school districts are required to provide.

I appreciate you considering my point of view. I have devoted my life to teaching children who struggle as learning disabilities. The work I feel so passionate about, however if this passes I will have to retire. Asking me to take a 3-credit course on top of what I already had while working year round is too much. I hope that you consider how challenging it is to recruit teachers. Adding more obstacle may make that challenge more daunting.

Thank you for the work you do.

Sincerely,

Colleen Schuster
Bristol, Vermont