

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 2—Committee on Finance

FILE NUMBER.....

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION—Urging the Commission on Professional Standards in Education to raise the level of competence that applicants for an initial license to teach are required to demonstrate on competency tests.

WHEREAS, The education of the children of this state and our nation is a primary concern of the residents of this state and of this nation; and

WHEREAS, A successful system of public education is an essential element of fulfilling this state's important goal of ensuring an equality of opportunity, full participation and economic self-sufficiency for the residents of this state; and

WHEREAS, The profession of teaching is one of the most important professions that a person may undertake because teachers who are employed by the school districts in this state play a critical role in ensuring that our children receive a challenging and enriching education; and

WHEREAS, The success of an effective system of public education depends upon teachers who are qualified, knowledgeable and competent in their subject areas; and

WHEREAS, The National Commission on Teaching & America's Future is an organization dedicated to providing an agenda for meeting "America's educational challenges, and connecting the quest for higher student achievement with the need for teachers who are knowledgeable, skillful, and committed to meeting the needs of all students"; and

WHEREAS, The National Commission on Teaching & America's Future published a report in 1996 entitled "What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future," and a report in 1997 entitled "Doing What Matters Most: Investing in Quality Teaching" which concluded respectively that, with respect to the many reforms taking place in our nation's system of public education, "the reform of elementary and secondary education depends first and foremost on restructuring its foundation — the teaching profession" and "[n]o other intervention can make the difference that a knowledgeable, skillful teacher can make in the learning process"; and

WHEREAS, A representative of the National Commission on Teaching & America's Future presented a report to the Legislative Committee on Education which concluded that the qualifications of teachers, as measured by the results of the competency tests that are required for licensure, the assessments of the performance of teachers and the experience of teachers, account for 43 percent of the scores that students receive on achievement and proficiency examinations; and

WHEREAS, During the past 2 years, this state has developed and enacted sweeping reforms in the system of public education to improve the academic achievement of students, including, without limitation, rigorous academic standards of content and performance; and

WHEREAS, The rigorous new academic standards of content and performance and other reforms made to the system of public education in this state demand a high level of quality and performance by both students and teachers; and

WHEREAS, The linchpin to the successful implementation of the rigorous academic standards in the public schools of this state is teachers who are qualified and trained to teach students the rigorous academic standards; and

WHEREAS, The Commission on Professional Standards in Education is responsible for establishing the qualifications for licensing teachers in this state and for adopting regulations governing the examinations for the issuance of initial licenses to teachers; and

WHEREAS, The regulations adopted by the Commission on Professional Standards in Education provide that an applicant for an initial license to teach must pass a competency test that has been approved by the Commission at a level of competence specified by the Commission; and

WHEREAS, According to a report issued in 1995 by the Department of Education entitled "The Nevada Competency Testing Program For Educational Personnel," the specified level of competence required of successful applicants on the competency tests is based upon, without limitation, performance levels of applicants, considerations of the supply and demand of teachers in this state and the levels of competence set by other states that use the same series of competency tests as this state; and

WHEREAS, Instead of basing the specified level on such external factors, the specified level of competence required of successful applicants for an initial license to teach should be set at a level that provides a meaningful standard for entry into the demanding profession of teaching to ensure that only competent and qualified persons are issued a license in this state; and

WHEREAS, Many states, including, without limitation, Georgia, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Virginia, which require the same series of competency tests for teachers as this state, have recently raised the level of competence required of teachers on those tests; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, THE ASSEMBLY CONCURRING, That the members of the 70th session of the Nevada Legislature urge the Commission on Professional Standards in Education, in consideration of the rigorous demands placed on teachers in this state, raise the level of competence that a successful applicant for an initial license to teach is required to demonstrate on the competency tests required by the Commission; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Secretary of the Senate prepare and transmit a copy of this resolution to the President of the Commission on Professional Standards in Education.

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