

1                                   A bill to be entitled  
 2           An act relating to educator certification pathways for  
 3           veterans; amending s. 1012.56, F.S.; expanding  
 4           eligibility to seek educator certification to  
 5           specified military servicemembers who have completed a  
 6           specified education requirement; authorizing the  
 7           Department of Education to issue a temporary  
 8           certificate to specified military servicemembers who  
 9           have completed a specified education requirement;  
 10          specifying the duration of a temporary certificate for  
 11          specified military servicemembers; amending s.  
 12          1012.59, F.S.; making a technical change; providing an  
 13          effective date.

14  
 15   Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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 17           Section 1. Paragraph (c) of subsection (2) and subsection  
 18          (7) of section 1012.56, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

19           1012.56 Educator certification requirements.—

20           (2) ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA.—To be eligible to seek  
 21          certification, a person must:

22           (c)1. Document receipt of a bachelor's or higher degree  
 23          from an accredited institution of higher learning, or a  
 24          nonaccredited institution of higher learning that the Department  
 25          of Education has identified as having a quality program

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26 | resulting in a bachelor's degree, or higher. Each applicant  
27 | seeking initial certification must have attained a minimum  
28 | cumulative ~~at least a 2.5 overall~~ grade point average of 2.5 on  
29 | a 4.0 scale in the applicant's major field of study; or

30 | 2. Document 48 months of active-duty military service with  
31 | an honorable discharge or a medical separation and completion of  
32 | 60 college credits with a minimum cumulative grade point average  
33 | of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale, as provided by one or more accredited  
34 | institutions of higher learning or a nonaccredited institution  
35 | of higher learning identified by the Department of Education as  
36 | having a quality program resulting in a bachelor's degree or  
37 | higher.

38 |  
39 | The applicant may document the required education by submitting  
40 | official transcripts from institutions of higher education or by  
41 | authorizing the direct submission of such official transcripts  
42 | through established electronic network systems. The bachelor's  
43 | or higher degree may not be required in areas approved in rule  
44 | by the State Board of Education as nondegreed areas. The State  
45 | Board of Education may adopt rules that, for purposes of  
46 | demonstrating completion of specific certification requirements,  
47 | allow for the acceptance of college course credits recommended  
48 | by the American Council for Education (ACE), as posted on an  
49 | official ACE transcript.

50 | (7) TYPES AND TERMS OF CERTIFICATION.—

51 (a) The Department of Education shall issue a professional  
52 certificate for a period not to exceed 5 years to any applicant  
53 who fulfills one of the following:

54 1. Meets all the applicable requirements outlined in  
55 subsection (2).

56 2. For a professional certificate covering grades 6  
57 through 12:

58 a. Meets the applicable requirements of paragraphs (2) (a) -  
59 (h).

60 b. Holds a master's or higher degree in the area of  
61 science, technology, engineering, or mathematics.

62 c. Teaches a high school course in the subject of the  
63 advanced degree.

64 d. Is rated highly effective as determined by the  
65 teacher's performance evaluation under s. 1012.34, based in part  
66 on student performance as measured by a statewide, standardized  
67 assessment or an Advanced Placement, Advanced International  
68 Certificate of Education, or International Baccalaureate  
69 examination.

70 e. Achieves a passing score on the Florida professional  
71 education competency examination required by state board rule.

72 3. Meets the applicable requirements of paragraphs (2) (a) -  
73 (h) and completes a professional preparation and education  
74 competence program approved by the department pursuant to  
75 paragraph (8) (c) or an educator preparation institute approved

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76 | by the department pursuant to s. 1004.85. An applicant who  
77 | completes one of these programs and is rated highly effective as  
78 | determined by his or her performance evaluation under s. 1012.34  
79 | is not required to take or achieve a passing score on the  
80 | professional education competency examination in order to be  
81 | awarded a professional certificate.

82 | (b) The department shall issue a temporary certificate to  
83 | any applicant who:

84 | 1. Completes the requirements outlined in paragraphs

85 | (2) (a)-(f); and

86 | 2. Completes the subject area content requirements  
87 | specified in state board rule or demonstrates mastery of subject  
88 | area knowledge pursuant to subsection (5); and

89 | 3.a. Holds an accredited degree or a degree approved by  
90 | the Department of Education at the level required for the  
91 | subject area specialization in state board rule; or

92 | b. For a subject area specialization for which the state  
93 | board otherwise requires a bachelor's degree, has completed 48  
94 | months of active-duty military service with an honorable  
95 | discharge or medical separation and 60 college credits with a  
96 | minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale, as  
97 | provided by one or more accredited institutions of higher  
98 | learning or a nonaccredited institution of higher learning that  
99 | the Department of Education has identified as having a quality  
100 | program resulting in a bachelor's degree or higher.

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101 (c) The department shall issue one nonrenewable 2-year  
102 temporary certificate and one nonrenewable 5-year professional  
103 certificate to a qualified applicant who holds a bachelor's  
104 degree in the area of speech-language impairment to allow for  
105 completion of a master's degree program in speech-language  
106 impairment.

107 (d)1. Except for a temporary certificate issued under sub-  
108 subparagraph (b)3.b., each temporary certificate is valid for 3  
109 school fiscal years and is nonrenewable.

110 2. Each temporary certificate issued under sub-  
111 subparagraph (b)3.b. is valid for 5 school fiscal years and is  
112 nonrenewable.

113  
114 At least 1 year before an individual's temporary certificate is  
115 set to expire, the department shall electronically notify the  
116 individual of the date on which his or her certificate will  
117 expire and provide a list of each method by which the  
118 qualifications for a professional certificate can be completed.  
119 The State Board of Education shall adopt rules to allow the  
120 department to extend the validity period of a temporary  
121 certificate for 2 years when the requirements for the  
122 professional certificate were not completed due to the serious  
123 illness or injury of the applicant, the military service of an  
124 applicant's spouse, other extraordinary extenuating  
125 circumstances, or if the certificateholder is rated highly

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126 effective in the immediate prior year's performance evaluation  
127 pursuant to s. 1012.34 or has completed a 2-year mentorship  
128 program pursuant to s. 1012.56(8). The department shall extend  
129 the temporary certificate upon approval by the Commissioner of  
130 Education. A written request for extension of the certificate  
131 shall be submitted by the district school superintendent, the  
132 governing authority of a university lab school, the governing  
133 authority of a state-supported school, or the governing  
134 authority of a private school.

135 Section 2. Paragraph (c) of subsection (3) of section  
136 1012.59, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

137 1012.59 Certification fees.—

138 (3) The State Board of Education shall waive initial  
139 general knowledge, professional education, and subject area  
140 examination fees and certification fees for:

141 (c) An honorably discharged veteran of the United States  
142 Armed Forces or a veteran of a reserve component thereof ~~who~~  
143 ~~served on active duty~~ and the spouse or surviving spouse of such  
144 a veteran.

145 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2022.