

1 A bill to be entitled
 2 An act relating to educator certification pathways for
 3 veterans; amending s. 1012.56, F.S.; authorizing the
 4 Department of Education to issue a temporary
 5 certificate to specified military servicemembers who
 6 meet certain criteria; requiring a teacher mentorship
 7 for specified military servicemembers who hold a
 8 temporary certificate; specifying the duration and
 9 issuance of a temporary certificate for specified
 10 military servicemembers; amending s. 1012.59, F.S.;
 11 making a technical change; providing an effective
 12 date.

13
 14 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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 16 Section 1. Subsection (7) of section 1012.56, Florida
 17 Statutes, is amended to read:

18 1012.56 Educator certification requirements.—

19 (7) TYPES AND TERMS OF CERTIFICATION.—

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

23 1. Meets all the applicable requirements outlined in
 24 subsection (2).

25 2. For a professional certificate covering grades 6

26 | through 12:
 27 | a. Meets the applicable requirements of paragraphs (2) (a) -
 28 | (h) .
 29 | b. Holds a master's or higher degree in the area of
 30 | science, technology, engineering, or mathematics.
 31 | c. Teaches a high school course in the subject of the
 32 | advanced degree.
 33 | d. Is rated highly effective as determined by the
 34 | teacher's performance evaluation under s. 1012.34, based in part
 35 | on student performance as measured by a statewide, standardized
 36 | assessment or an Advanced Placement, Advanced International
 37 | Certificate of Education, or International Baccalaureate
 38 | examination.
 39 | e. Achieves a passing score on the Florida professional
 40 | education competency examination required by state board rule.
 41 | 3. Meets the applicable requirements of paragraphs (2) (a) -
 42 | (h) and completes a professional preparation and education
 43 | competence program approved by the department pursuant to
 44 | paragraph (8) (c) or an educator preparation institute approved
 45 | by the department pursuant to s. 1004.85. An applicant who
 46 | completes one of these programs and is rated highly effective as
 47 | determined by his or her performance evaluation under s. 1012.34
 48 | is not required to take or achieve a passing score on the
 49 | professional education competency examination in order to be
 50 | awarded a professional certificate.

51 (b) The department shall issue a temporary certificate to
52 any applicant who:

53 1. Completes the requirements outlined in paragraphs
54 (2)(a)-(f) and completes the subject area content requirements
55 specified in state board rule or demonstrates mastery of subject
56 area knowledge pursuant to subsection (5) and holds an
57 accredited degree or a degree approved by the Department of
58 Education at the level required for the subject area
59 specialization in state board rule; or

60 2. For a certificate for which the State Board of
61 Education otherwise requires a bachelor's degree, documents 48
62 months of active-duty military service with an honorable
63 discharge or a medical separation; completes the requirements
64 outlined in paragraphs (2)(a), (b), (d), (e), and (f); completes
65 the subject area content requirements specified in state board
66 rule or demonstrates mastery of subject area knowledge pursuant
67 to subsection (5); documents completion of 60 college credits
68 with a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.5 on a 4.0
69 scale, as provided by one or more accredited institutions of
70 higher learning or a nonaccredited institution of higher
71 learning identified by the Department of Education as having a
72 quality program resulting in a bachelor's degree or higher; and
73 enrolls in a teacher preparation program approved pursuant to s.
74 1004.04.

75 (c) The department shall issue one nonrenewable 2-year

76 temporary certificate and one nonrenewable 5-year professional
77 certificate to a qualified applicant who holds a bachelor's
78 degree in the area of speech-language impairment to allow for
79 completion of a master's degree program in speech-language
80 impairment.

81 (d) A person who is issued a temporary certificate under
82 subparagraph (b)2. must be assigned a teacher mentor for a
83 minimum of 2 school years commencing employment. Each teacher
84 mentor selected by the school district, charter school, or
85 charter management organization must:

86 1. Hold a valid professional certificate issued pursuant
87 to s. 1012.56;

88 2. Have earned at least 3 years of teaching experience in
89 prekindergarten through grade 12; and

90 3. Have earned an effective or highly effective rating on
91 the prior year's performance evaluation under s. 1012.34.

92 (e)1. A ~~each~~ temporary certificate issued under
93 subparagraph (b)1. is valid for 3 school fiscal years and is
94 nonrenewable.

95 2. A temporary certificate issued under subparagraph (b)2.
96 is valid for 5 school fiscal years, is limited to a one-time
97 issuance, and is nonrenewable.

98
99 At least 1 year before an individual's temporary certificate is
100 set to expire, the department shall electronically notify the

101 individual of the date on which his or her certificate will
 102 expire and provide a list of each method by which the
 103 qualifications for a professional certificate can be completed.
 104 The State Board of Education shall adopt rules to allow the
 105 department to extend the validity period of a temporary
 106 certificate for 2 years when the requirements for the
 107 professional certificate were not completed due to the serious
 108 illness or injury of the applicant, the military service of an
 109 applicant's spouse, other extraordinary extenuating
 110 circumstances, or if the certificateholder is rated highly
 111 effective in the immediate prior year's performance evaluation
 112 pursuant to s. 1012.34 or has completed a 2-year mentorship
 113 program pursuant to s. 1012.56(8). The department shall extend
 114 the temporary certificate upon approval by the Commissioner of
 115 Education. A written request for extension of the certificate
 116 shall be submitted by the district school superintendent, the
 117 governing authority of a university lab school, the governing
 118 authority of a state-supported school, or the governing
 119 authority of a private school.

120 Section 2. Paragraph (c) of subsection (3) of section
 121 1012.59, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

122 1012.59 Certification fees.—

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

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126 (c) An honorably discharged veteran of the United States
127 Armed Forces or a veteran of a reserve component thereof ~~who~~
128 ~~served on active duty~~ and the spouse or surviving spouse of such
129 a veteran.

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