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1  
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.

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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 through  
26 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

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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 teacher's  
34 performance evaluation under s. 1012.34, based in part on  
35 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

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59 specialization in state board rule; or

60 2. For a subject area specialization for which the state  
61 board 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); and documents completion of 60 college  
68 credits with a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.5 on  
69 a 4.0 scale, as provided by one or more accredited institutions  
70 of 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.

73 (c) The department shall issue one nonrenewable 2-year  
74 temporary certificate and one nonrenewable 5-year professional  
75 certificate to a qualified applicant who holds a bachelor's  
76 degree in the area of speech-language impairment to allow for  
77 completion of a master's degree program in speech-language  
78 impairment.

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

84 1. Hold a valid professional certificate issued pursuant to  
85 s. 1012.56;

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

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

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

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

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97 At least 1 year before an individual's temporary certificate is  
98 set to expire, the department shall electronically notify the  
99 individual of the date on which his or her certificate will  
100 expire and provide a list of each method by which the  
101 qualifications for a professional certificate can be completed.  
102 The State Board of Education shall adopt rules to allow the  
103 department to extend the validity period of a temporary  
104 certificate for 2 years when the requirements for the  
105 professional certificate were not completed due to the serious  
106 illness or injury of the applicant, the military service of an  
107 applicant's spouse, other extraordinary extenuating  
108 circumstances, or if the certificateholder is rated highly  
109 effective in the immediate prior year's performance evaluation  
110 pursuant to s. 1012.34 or has completed a 2-year mentorship  
111 program pursuant to s. 1012.56(8). The department shall extend  
112 the temporary certificate upon approval by the Commissioner of  
113 Education. A written request for extension of the certificate  
114 shall be submitted by the district school superintendent, the  
115 governing authority of a university lab school, the governing  
116 authority of a state-supported school, or the governing

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117 authority of a private school.

118 Section 2. Paragraph (c) of subsection (3) of section  
119 1012.59, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

120 1012.59 Certification fees.—

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

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

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