



**Testimony**  
**House Bill 1166**  
**March 12, 2021; 9:30 a.m.**  
**Education Standards and Practice Board**  
**Dr. Rebecca Pitkin**

Good morning Chairman Vedaa and members of the Government and Veterans Affairs Committee. My name is Rebecca Pitkin and I am the Executive Director of the Education Standards and Practices Board. I am here today to provide neutral testimony and request clarification on several elements of the bill as well as to provide information about what ESPB currently has in rule regarding this proposed bill.

Our board approved fee waivers for military spouses and the rules for this became effective October 15, 2020. To date, 15 military spouses received licenses with no fees charged, excluding the fee for a BCI/FBI background check. In addition, one individual had their late fee waived as they were deployed when their license expired. Our licensure application was modified to reflect the new rules. Comments on our satisfaction survey evidence the positive response to these rules. ESPB keeps detailed records regarding military spouses and military members licenses.

ESPB currently has two pathways, already in rule, which enables out of state individuals to enter a classroom in an expediated manner. ESPB also has an *Other State Educator License (OSEL)* which is granted to an individual who holds a valid license in another state, has completed a traditional teacher education program and has met their testing requirements. We also have an *Out of State Reciprocal License* for those who graduated from a teacher preparation program



outside of ND and do not hold a teaching license in another state. The applicant is issued a license and has up to 4 years to meet ND standards. Both types of licenses require a background check before working with students, minimizing risk to students, which is a priority of ESPB. Our current license procedures for out of state (foreign) applicants allows even more time for them to complete the requirements; we are able to get them into the classroom right away, after a background check, and even prior to this (with a 40 Day Provisional License) if all parties have given their consent while waiting for the background check to be completed.

It is unclear how ESPB would measure demonstrated “competency” (line 14) and it would certainly be difficult to measure this using teacher evaluations as they are not something ESPB has access to. The bills states an applicant must demonstrate competency for at least two of the four years preceding the date of application, yet ESPB will grant an Out of State license to applications who have just graduated and have not taught yet, but received a license in the state where they graduated. Thus, our current rules have fewer barriers than the one in HB 1166.

ESPB requests additional clarity on “a foreign practitioner who is a resident of the state” and wonders how this is measured or determined.

The Education Standards and Practices Board strives to work across multiple stakeholders to promote and increase quality educators in North Dakota to “do what is best for kids”. We currently have several processes in place to license out of state individuals in an expedient manner, yet in a way that ensures the safety of our North Dakota students.

This concludes my testimony.

