

Thank you, Senators, for the opportunity to testify. I am Ken Weaver, dean of The Teachers College at Emporia State University. I am speaking against SB76, specifically section e, which would require licensing a teacher in Kansas if the teacher is licensed as a teacher in another state.

In teacher preparation, each state develops its own standards for defining what a teacher in a specific teaching field must know and be able to do. While professional disciplines propose standards for teaching fields, the states through their respective boards of education decide the standards by which a teacher is prepared. States also decide on the evidence used to demonstrate that a candidate has met the standards. Some states are prescriptive. Other states like Kansas allow teacher preparation programs like those in the Regents universities to present their own evidence in order to ensure that candidates for licensing are meeting the standards. Fifty states plus the District of Columbia choose their own standards for a teaching field and use different criteria to determine how the standards are met. Reciprocity across states is compromised by the variability of credentialing systems across states. But there are more differences across states that compromise reciprocity.

For example, SB76 refers only to licensing. 27 states do not license teachers; they certify. I was certified to teach in South Carolina; I'm licensed to teach in Kansas.

I was certified to teach General Science in South Carolina. In Kansas, on the other hand, science is licensed as biology, chemistry, physics, and earth and space science. Even within disciplines, the credentials across states may not line up.

There are even two different standardized tests used across the nation to validate a candidate's content and pedagogical knowledge. Kansas uses the Educational Testing Service Praxis II series; Oklahoma uses the National Evaluation Series from Pearson.

Amid the dizzying array of permutations that prevents reciprocity as articulated by SB76, the staff of Teacher Licensure and Accreditation at the Kansas State Department of Education have developed clear methods for reviewing teacher credentials from other states. Many are quickly approved based on their training and experience. There are some states that require very little for licensure, and frankly, some of these people aren't qualified to teach. Kansas has established the baseline standards we expect for all teachers.

SB76 allows for reciprocity with every state, no matter what they expect, and no oversight. Our state requires that we prepare students on certain topics, knowledge and skills. This bill ignores that, and we could, for example, have individuals with no little or no teacher training licensed by our state.

It is an "all hands on deck" time right now in Kansas to attract and retain people into teaching. Undermining the professionalism of the field as SB76 will do makes it harder to accomplish this goal.