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## TSTA OPPOSES HOUSE BILL 621

*The following are the Texas State Teachers Association's  
comments on HB 621*

The Texas State Teachers Association is respectfully submitting testimony in opposition to Representative Shaheen's House Bill (HB) 621. We recognize that Texas is facing a teacher shortage crisis, but we do not support giving privilege to certain prior experiences that are unrelated to education, nor do we support lowering the standards for entry into the profession.

Our fundamental opposition to this legislation is due to the fact that HB 621 would permit an individual without a college degree to serve as teacher of record for up to five years in Texas public schools. It would also permit an individual with no college credit hours and no related experience to serve as a career and technical education teacher.

TSTA appreciates the bill's recognition that new teachers benefit from the support of experienced mentors. We are in full support of amending current law to require that every classroom teacher new to the profession be assigned a mentor for at least two years. Quality induction supports are necessary regardless of preparation route, but mentor supports are especially critical for individuals who have been issued a temporary certificate and who, under current law, are acting as teachers of record without holding a standard certificate or having completed an educator preparation program. Research shows that educators who are alternatively certified are much more likely to leave the profession than educators certified in a traditional program, and most alternatively certified educators become teachers of record with minimal field experience and no clinical teaching. These teachers certainly need quality induction supports such as a mentor at a minimum.

But it is critical to understand that no mentor provision would be sufficient to induct a novice teacher into the profession who otherwise has no related experience and insufficient college credit hours.

TSTA values the tremendous contribution and sacrifice that individuals who have served in the armed forces of the United States make to our country, but we cannot adopt the practice of substituting service to our country for experience required of other educator candidates. Professional prerequisites exist for a reason, and it is a disservice to our students not to uphold the professional standards of classroom educators.