

2801 West Bancroft Street
Toledo, Ohio 43560

18 June 2018

To the Honorable Members of the Legislature:

Due to the quick scheduling of your hearing, I was unable to deliver my message in support of the American Board personally, but it is my pleasure to have it delivered in writing. Let me say in the interests of full disclosure that I have served on the Board of Directors for the American Board for many years. Neither my service, nor my testimony, are compensated.

As a professor in an Ohio college of education, my support for the American Board may seem a bit at odds with conventional wisdom. While there is nothing wrong with conventional wisdom, the path less worn is frequently the more positive.

I believe in education. I believe in colleges of education. I believe that for many, if not most, young people entering college today to join the teaching profession, the best preparation is likely at a college of education. That said, entrance into the profession of teaching should not be a black and white issue. If you will indulge me, I would like to tell you the story of a recent student encounter. I was approached by a gentleman holding a bachelor's degree in math, with four years post-baccalaureate experience, who was now interested in pursuing a teaching career. I offered him assistance in navigating the pathway to licensure. His transcript was evaluated by the college and he was told it would take an additional three-years-worth of coursework for him to be licensable. Three years. Three years he could not afford to take off from work. Three years of education he could not afford. Three years was tantamount to earning yet another bachelor's degree. As a result, this young man, with a bachelor's degree and four years of additional experience went into a different profession. We lost a passionate math teacher who wanted to give back to students in a content area he loved.

Too often, trained, experienced, professionals who wish to enter the teaching profession are blocked by licensing requirements that are overzealous and monopolistic. It is easy to say alternative pathways already exist. But these alternative pathways are often limited to certain areas, are often expensive, and are time consuming. Many excellent chemists, biologists, English experts, historians, mathematicians, musicians, and artists are simply turned away because they do not have and cannot obtain additional training within a college of education. I find the extinguishing of intellect and a desire to give back a serious problem, at a time when dedication, love of content, and an interest in improving education should be a top priority.

Alternative pathways diminish neither colleges of education nor the teaching profession; they simply expand them. A recent study conducted by Dr. Toni Sondergeld, an Associate Professor at Drexel University, and a three-time graduate of the University of Toledo, concluded that principals found the American Board prepared teachers equivalent to traditionally prepared teachers in almost every aspect, and better prepared in several areas. Furthermore, she found

these teachers likely to be retained, and because retention is almost a more serious problem than recruitment, such news is distinctly positive for the American Board teachers.

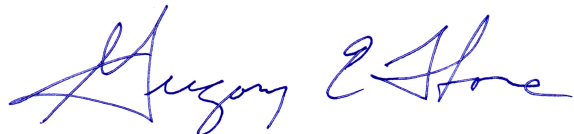
To suggest that the American Board is a one-size-fits-all program is incorrect. States have tailored American Board offerings to their own needs. While it is true, Ohio does not have a teacher shortage, shortages are not what drove a passionate potential Math teacher away from the profession. Unrealistic expectations for additional education did. Why should he, or the chemist wishing to give back, or the historian wishing to inspire the future, or the artist wishing to help children paint the world, be offered such opportunities only when shortages exist? The idea of the American Board is not to simply place generic bodies in classrooms, but to put content experts into contact with students for whom a brighter future exists.

It is ironic that professors frequently receive no training at all in pedagogy, nor do we participate in any licensure program, yet we are given the opportunity to teach children of high school age all the time, including within the new transitions programs. We are never questioned. What makes us different? Why does being Dr. Stone make me immediately employable as a professor but not a teacher? At present, for example, I could not myself be licensed in the State of Ohio.

This is not a black and white issue, nor is it a party line issue. Smartly done, alternative pathways, most particularly the American Board, do not denigrate colleges of education. Instead the pathway celebrates passion, inspiration, and content expertise as a way to enter the teaching profession. It is, essentially, a celebration of diversity.

Many thanks.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gregory E. Stone". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Gregory E. Stone, Ph.D., M.A.
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