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OHIO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Ohio House Primary and Secondary Education Committee

HB 554 – Proponent Testimony

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Good afternoon Chair Manning, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the Ohio House Primary and Secondary Committee. On behalf of the Ohio Education Association (OEA), I am Matthew Dotson with OEA Government Relations. Thank you for the opportunity to provide Proponent testimony in support of HB 554 (R-Bird/D-Lightbody), legislation that creates a two-year temporary nonrenewable educator license that is convertible into a 5-year professional educator license if certain conditions are met.

HB 554 (R-Bird/D-Lightbody) allows individuals with expired professional educator licenses or certificates (issued under former law) to apply to the State Board of Education for a two-year temporary nonrenewable educator license. An individual who receives a temporary educator license must also complete any training required by the district or school prior to providing instruction.

The two-year temporary license created by HB 554 is valid for teaching in the same subject areas and grades for which the expired certificate or license was issued, including any endorsements attached to the certificate or license. An individual will receive a fully renewed 5-year professional educator license if they complete either 18 continuing education units (180 contact hours) or 6 semester hours of coursework in the area of licensure (or area related to the teaching field) during the time they hold a two-year temporary license granted under HB 554.

Please note that HB 554 expands on similar action taken by the State Board of Education in a revised rule effective on November 4, 2021. That revised rule allows a school district/school to request the State Board to grant an individual with an expired professional educator license a one-year, nonrenewable “reinstatement license,” valid in the same grade levels and curriculum areas as an individual’s expired license. Under the State Board rule, an individual may receive a renewed 5-year professional educator license if they complete either 9 semester hours of coursework or 27 continuing education units (270 contact hours), or other equivalent activities related to classroom teaching or the area of licensure, during the period of the one-year license.

The OEA will lead the way for continuous improvement of public education while advocating for members and the learners they serve.

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As compared to the State Board rule, HB 554 allows an individual with an expired professional educator license/certificate to return to the classroom sooner, stay longer, and have a better chance of renewing their expired professional educator license/certificate.

While OEA supports HB 554 as introduced, OEA recommends a more flexible window for completing the credit/coursework requirements in the bill, such as granting individuals credit for eligible coursework completed within five years prior to applying for full renewal of an expired professional educator license.

Thank you for your consideration of this feedback from the Ohio Education Association.