

By Representative Murman

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to the Transition to Teaching
3 Act; creating the Transition to Teaching Act
4 with the intent of addressing the need of
5 high-poverty school districts for teachers;
6 defining terms; providing procedures for
7 applying to participate in the program;
8 specifying authorized activities and uses of
9 funds; authorizing the Commissioner of
10 Education to grant emergency certificates to
11 program participants under certain
12 circumstances; requiring a program participant
13 to serve in a high-poverty school district for
14 3 years; requiring the Commissioner of
15 Education to establish requirements to ensure
16 that program participants fulfill their service
17 obligation or repay any stipend or financial
18 incentive received; requiring the commissioner
19 to distribute awards equitably; authorizing
20 funding for the award of contracts, grants, or
21 cooperative agreements for activities
22 authorized by this act; requiring the State
23 Board of Education to adopt rules; providing an
24 effective date.

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26 WHEREAS, school districts in Florida are having an
27 increasingly difficult time finding qualified, quality
28 teachers to fill positions in critical shortage areas, and
29 WHEREAS, since 1994, more than 3,000 retired members of
30 the military have become teachers through the federal Troops
31 to Teachers program, and

1 WHEREAS, the downsizing of the military and the
2 shrinking pool of military retirees create the necessity to
3 pursue additional potential labor pools, NOW, THEREFORE,

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5 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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7 Section 1. (1) SHORT TITLE.--This section may be
8 cited as the "Transition to Teaching Act."

9 (2) PURPOSE.--The purpose of this act is to address
10 the need of high-poverty school districts for highly qualified
11 teachers in specific subject areas, such as mathematics,
12 science, foreign languages, bilingual education, and special
13 education, by:

14 (a) Continuing to participate in and enhancing
15 Florida's involvement in the federal Troops to Teachers
16 program which recruits and supports the placement of such
17 teachers.

18 (b) Recruiting, preparing, placing, and supporting
19 professionals interested in changing careers who have
20 knowledge and experience that will help them become such
21 teachers.

22 (3) DEFINITIONS.--As used in this section, the term:

23 (a) "High-poverty school district" means a school
24 district in which the percentage of children ages 5 through 17
25 from families below the poverty level is 20 percent or
26 greater, or in which the number of such children exceeds
27 10,000.

28 (b) "Program participants" means professionals who:

- 29 1. Hold at least a baccalaureate degree.
30 2. Demonstrate interest in, and commitment to,
31 becoming a teacher.

1 3. Have knowledge and experience relevant to teaching
2 a high-need subject area in a high-poverty school district.

3 (4) APPLICATION TO PARTICIPATE.--A district school
4 board, institution of higher education, or other provider of
5 teacher training may apply for funds to conduct activities
6 authorized by this act by submitting an application to the
7 Commissioner of Education which contains such information as
8 the commissioner requires, including:

9 (a) A description of the target group of professionals
10 changing careers upon which the applicant will focus in
11 carrying out its program under this act, including a
12 description of the characteristics of that target group that
13 shows how the knowledge and experience of its members are
14 relevant to meeting the purpose of this act.

15 (b) A description of how the applicant will identify
16 and recruit program participants.

17 (c) A description of the training that program
18 participants will receive and how that training will relate to
19 their certification as teachers.

20 (d) A description of how the applicant will ensure
21 that program participants are placed and teach in high-poverty
22 local educational agencies.

23 (e) A description of the teacher induction services
24 (which may be provided through existing induction programs)
25 the program participants will receive throughout at least
26 their first year of teaching.

27 (f) A description of how the applicant will
28 collaborate, as needed, with other institutions, agencies, or
29 organizations to recruit, train, place, and support program
30 participants under this act, including evidence of the
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1 commitment of those institutions, agencies, or organizations
2 to the applicant's program.
3 (g) A description of how the applicant will evaluate
4 the progress and effectiveness of its program, including:
5 1. The program's goals and objectives.
6 2. The performance indicators the applicant will use
7 to measure the program's progress.
8 3. The outcome measures that will be used to determine
9 the program's effectiveness.
10 (h) An assurance that the applicant will provide to
11 the commissioner such information as the commissioner deems
12 necessary to determine the overall effectiveness of programs
13 under this act.
14 (5) USES OF FUNDS; AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.--Funds
15 awarded according to this section may be used for:
16 (a) Recruiting program participants, including
17 informing them of opportunities offered by the program and
18 putting them in contact with other institutions, agencies, or
19 organizations that would train, place, and support them.
20 (b) Training stipends and other financial incentives
21 for program participants, not to exceed \$5,000 per
22 participant.
23 (c) Assisting institutions of higher education or
24 other providers of teacher training to tailor their training
25 to meet the particular needs of professionals who are changing
26 their careers to teaching.
27 (d) Placement activities, including identifying
28 high-poverty school districts with a need for the particular
29 skills and characteristics of the newly trained program
30 participants and assisting those participants to obtain
31 employment in those school districts.

1 (e) Postplacement induction or support activities for
2 program participants.

3 (6) EMERGENCY CERTIFICATION.--Upon the request of the
4 school board of the district in which the program participant
5 will be employed, the Commissioner of Education may grant a
6 1-year emergency teaching certificate to a program participant
7 upon completion of training according to this section.

8 (7) PERIOD OF SERVICE; REPAYMENT.--A participant in a
9 program authorized by this section, who completes his or her
10 training, must serve in a high-poverty school district for at
11 least 3 years. The commissioner shall establish such
12 requirements as he or she deems appropriate to ensure that
13 program participants who receive a training stipend or other
14 financial incentive, but fail to complete their service
15 obligation, repay all or a portion of such stipend or other
16 incentive.

17 (8) EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION.--To the extent
18 practicable, the commissioner shall make awards under this act
19 that support programs in different geographic regions of the
20 state.

21 (9) FUNDING.--The Commissioner of Education is
22 authorized to use funds provided annually in the General
23 Appropriations Act for the Transition to Teaching Act to award
24 grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements to institutions
25 of higher education and public and private nonprofit agencies
26 or organizations for activities authorized by this act.

27 (10) RULEMAKING.--The State Board of Education shall
28 adopt rules pursuant to ss. 120.536(1) and 120.54 to implement
29 the provisions of this section.

30 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2000.

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HOUSE SUMMARY

Creates the Transition to Teaching Act with the intent of addressing the need of high-poverty school districts for teachers. Defines terms. Provides procedures for applying to participate in the program. Specifies authorized activities and uses of funds. Authorizes the Commissioner of Education to grant emergency certificates to program participants under certain circumstances. Requires a program participant to serve in a high-poverty school district for 3 years. Requires the Commissioner of Education to establish requirements to ensure that program participants fulfill their service obligation or repay any stipend or financial incentive received. Requires the commissioner to distribute awards equitably. Authorizes funding for the award of contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements for activities authorized by this act. Requires the State Board of Education to adopt rules.