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Office

S.B. 361
134th General Assembly

Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

[Click here for S.B. 361's Bill Analysis](#)

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsor: Sen. Hoagland

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: No

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Highlights

- The bill may provide school districts and other public schools with a greater pool of teachers to meet staffing needs by allowing a district or school to employ an eligible veteran who does not hold an educator license as a teacher under a broader array of qualifications.
- The bill may increase Ohio Department of Education (ODE) costs paid from the State Board of Education Licensure Fund (Fund 4L20) to process registrations and carry out other registration requirements for eligible veterans desiring to become teachers.
- The cost of performing the Bureau of Criminal Investigation's background activities and services may increase to some degree. These costs will be more or less offset by the fees charged to conduct a background check.
- Districts and schools that choose to employ eligible veterans under the bill may incur some costs to mentor them.

Detailed Analysis

Overview

Generally, an individual teaching grades K-12 in school districts and other public schools must hold a license issued by the State Board of Education. However, current law allows school

districts to employ certain veterans as unlicensed teachers.¹ The bill generally broadens the qualifications permitting a veteran to be employed as an unlicensed teacher and extends that authority to community and STEM schools. The bill requires a veteran employed as an unlicensed teacher, both under current law and the bill, to (1) register with the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), (2) undergo a criminal records check, and (3) be enrolled in the Retained Applicant Fingerprint Database (RAPBACK). In addition, it requires a district or school to assign a licensed teacher to mentor the veterans newly employed under the bill. The fiscal effects of these provisions are discussed below.

Fiscal effects

School districts, community schools, and STEM schools

The bill may provide school districts, community schools, and STEM schools a greater pool of individuals to fill teaching positions. However, school districts and other public schools may incur some permissive costs, particularly due to the mentorship requirements of the bill. Districts and schools that opt to hire a veteran as an unlicensed teacher must assign a licensed teacher, with at least three years of experience and, if the employer is a district, a teacher evaluation rating of “skilled” or higher, to mentor the veteran for at least the first two years of the veteran’s employment. These mentors may be compensated for their extra service through a stipend from the district or school, similar to stipends for teachers mentoring entry-level educators under the Ohio Teacher Residency Program. Any costs will depend on implementation decisions made by a district or school.

Ohio Department of Education

The bill may lead to an increase in ODE administrative costs to process the registrations for veterans employed as unlicensed teachers. ODE may also pay more in fees for the Retained Applicant Fingerprint Database (RAPBACK) continuous criminal record monitoring service if additional individuals become enrolled.² Typically, these administrative costs are more or less offset by fees paid by the applicants for licenses or other credentials that are deposited into the State Board of Education Licensure Fund (Fund 4L20). Fees cover the costs of processing licensure applications (including RAPBACK fees), providing technical assistance related to licensure, and administering the educator disciplinary process, among other functions. However, the bill is silent on whether a registration fee applies to a veteran employed as an unlicensed teacher. As a point of reference, the fee for a professional or resident educator license equates to \$40 annually.

¹ These qualifications include (1) being honorably discharged between June 30, 1997 and June 30, 2000, (2) having meaningful teacher or instructional experience while in the armed forces, and (3) holding a baccalaureate degree. For more information see [R.C. 3319.283\(A\)](#).

² RAPBACK provides participating entities notice that an individual they have enrolled in the database has been arrested or convicted of a criminal offense. The Attorney General’s (AGO) Bureau of Criminal Investigation charges participating agencies an initial fee for each individual entered in RAPBACK and an ongoing annual fee per individual, both of which are \$5. ODE pays the fees from Fund 4L20. Upon receipt, AGO deposits RAPBACK fees into the General Reimbursement Fund (Fund 1060).

Background checks

A veteran employed as an unlicensed teacher must file state and federal background checks with ODE. Background checks filed with ODE are valid for five years. The bill may affect the workload of the Attorney General's Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) if the number of background checks requested each year increases as a result of the bill. Any associated increase in BCI's annual operating expenses will be more or less offset by the fees charged to conduct a check. BCI performs state-only background checks by comparing an individual's fingerprints against a database of criminal fingerprints to determine if there is a criminal record. BCI also administers federal background checks through the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), which uses a national database to search for criminal history records. The base fees of the state-only and FBI background checks are \$22 and \$25.25, respectively. All of the fees are credited to the General Reimbursement Fund (Fund 1060),³ with \$23.25 of the FBI background check fee subsequently disbursed to the FBI.

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³ The Attorney General uses the money credited to Fund 1060 to pay for operating expenses incurred in the provision of law enforcement services, legal representation, and overall office administration.