

Written Testimony
Opposition to part of HF2497
Lines: 173.13, 177.13, 218.23



- My name is Nafeesah Muhammad and I am a High School English teacher taking a time out. After 8 years of teaching and going on strike I decided to take a mental health break. I now get to support teachers as Deputy Director of Campaigns at Educators 4 Excellence supporting those who are fighting to stay in the classroom!
- I am in opposition to ending the Tier 2 to Tier 3 licensure pathway for experienced teachers who entered the profession through doors that had been previously closed to them.
- I went the traditional university route of obtaining my teaching licence and a Masters of Arts in Education. I already had a psychology degree- with an emphasis in adolescent development.
- I think it's Ironic that the Patrick Henry Class of 2021 voted me most inspirational teacher and within my commencement keynote speech I outlined the trials and tribulations of becoming a teacher (Plot twist- it wasn't testing and it's was the learning environment and experiences)- Moral of the story- I did it anyway!
- My question is why does it have to be that way? Why must we always endure challenging learning environments that disrespect our lived experiences and cultural identities in order to become... anything?
- So in the spirit of transformative justice. Let me elevate, so that you can investigate, the negative actions and cognitions, such as prejudice, discrimination, and racism within these institutions :
 - Like being the only person of color in my teacher prep program.
 - I often found my classes to be a place of hostility and isolation whenever the realities of racism and cultural competencies were discussed.
 - I never read a pedagogical or curriculum text written by Black scholars.
 - I had one Black professor who got sick and was replaced by a white elementary school teacher.
 - I was on unprepared, I struggled- seeking out my own professional development and radical self reflection saved me.
 - Oh! No one empowered us at the university level to better understand the politics and paychecks tied to MY teacher license:

- Ending the pathway pigeonholes them to one kind of learning experience - the pathway that privileges Eurocentric ways of learning and teaching.

When deciding how to vote on this bill, please consider the following:

- Do you wish to support increasing teacher diversity and reducing the teacher shortage?
- Or, do you wish to protect the wealth of institutions that benefit from all teacher candidates being forced to attend traditional preparation programs regardless of their professional experience or personal situation.

Thank you for your time and consideration