

February 22, 2021

Rep. Ruth Richardson  
Chair MN House Committee on Education Policy  
Subject: House File 950  
403 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

**Written Testimony Submission (Governor's Bill HF 950)  
Teach For America - Twin Cities**

I, Claire Jackson Stumbras, the Chief Program Officer of Teach For America Twin Cities, submit the following comments to be considered by the House Committee on Education Policy during the hearing on February 24th, 2021 regarding bill HF950.

**Context on Teach For America**

Teach for America has been operating in Minnesota since 2009. Our mission is to ensure that all students have access to an excellent education. As an AmeriCorps program, our corps members start with a two year commitment to provide rigorous and excellent instruction as classroom educators. As program alum, corps members continue to have a lifetime commitment to advance education equity and advocate for youth.

To date, TFA Twin Cities has trained over 300 teachers. For the past three years, 30% - 45% of our first and second year teachers have been teachers of color. Also during this duration, our 3-year retention rate in education has been over 85%. For the past 7 years TFA Twin Cities has hosted an annual recruitment event to attract experienced teachers, administrators, principals, and school and system leaders to Minnesota. To date, we have engaged close to 200 teachers and leaders in the event. See below for a summary of the impact this event has had on the talent landscape in the twin cities.

- 25% - Average percent of participants identifying as people of color
- 32% - Percent of participants licensed in shortage area (Special Ed, English as a Second Language, STEM)
- 57% - Average percent of participants who accept a job offer and move to the Twin Cities within 6 months

Through these efforts and our program, there are now over 900+ TFA alumni in MN. Close to 70% of these still work in education with the vast majority working in the K-12 as classroom educators, support staff, and administrators. As an organization that has a long-standing and vested interest in the education landscape in MN, we look forward to submitting the recommendations below.

**Testimony Regarding Bill HF950**

Teacher diversity is a significant area of concern in the state of MN - where too many students of color do not have access to teachers and leaders who reflect their own identities. As a state, we must continue to advocate for and

advance policy that will both diversify our teaching force and ensure each student has access to a high quality, effective teacher.

As written, HF950 will remove a pathway to licensure for our states effective Tier 2 teachers who would like to pursue a Tier 3 license (Section 7 Subdivision #2). This pathway provides a way for individuals who have demonstrated that they are effective educators to get permanent licenses. These teachers must first secure a Tier 2 license, satisfy requirements for the initial renewal of a Tier 2 license, and complete three years of teaching that demonstrates effectiveness through satisfactory evaluations. It has been three years since our state passed our tiered licensure system. There are high-quality Tier 2 teachers who are in their third year and, if this pathway is removed, they would not be allowed to receive the Tier 3 license they have been working towards and that would allow them to stay in the classroom.

Currently, 21% of individuals teaching on a Tier 2 license are teachers of color. Closing this pathway would remove a way for many of our state's teachers of color to get permanent licensure and would require many quality teachers in our state to navigate additional financial, time, and system barriers in order to secure a license. This pathway allows for quality educators who are meeting the standards of their local leaders and boards to continue teaching on a Tier 3 license without needing to overcome additional barriers that may be present in the teacher preparation program space. Additionally, this proposed change would only further exacerbate challenges that districts and schools are experiencing with attracting and retaining qualified teachers ([PELSB MN Teacher Supply and Demand Report 2021](#)) at a time when we need qualified teachers to address COVID-19 related impact on student learning and academic achievement.

We strongly urge the committee to remove the updated language found in Section 7, Subdivision #2 and keep our tiered licensure system intact, as originally written.

Sincerely,  
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One day, all children in this nation will have the opportunity to attain an excellent education.

TEACHFORAMERICA

