

Assembly Bill 221

Assignment Prohibition in Low-Income Schools

Assemblymember Cristina Garcia (D – 58)

PROPOSAL

AB 221 ensures that California's most vulnerable students are not used as learning pads or experiments for education reform agents. This measure maximizes the number of effective years of teaching provided to students by teachers hired in collaboration with their party organizations. Specifically, this measure prohibits school districts, county offices of education, and charter schools from entering into a contract with a third party organization to do any of the following:

- (1) To employ teachers who commit to teaching in the district for less than five years;
- (2) To employ teachers at a Title 1 school;
- (3) To pay a contract fee, recruitment fee or finder's fee when interviewing or hiring teachers.

BACKGROUND

With the adoption of Title 1 in 1965, government formally acknowledged that students in high-poverty communities face additional systematic barriers and made a commitment to ensure students have a fair and equal opportunity to obtain a high quality education.

Paying to recruit underqualified teachers, who leave at very high rates before becoming proficient, to teach in our poor communities compounds a longstanding inequity in our public schools and only adds additional barriers for our most vulnerable students to attain their academic success.

Teacher retention, particularly in low-income schools such as those where TFA teachers are placed, is critically important to closing the achievement gap. The revolving-door effect leaves the schools needing the most stability and continuity perpetually searching for new teachers to replace those who leave.

PROBLEM

Inadequate Training & Inappropriate Placement:

TFA Corps members are not qualified or adequately prepared to teach in our low-income schools – Corps members are usually placed in low-income schools with only 18 hours of student teaching (approximately 2.5 days cumulatively) during their five-week summer course

training. Corp members are essentially learning as they go with these students. For traditional teacher credentialing programs, students on average take two to four years to complete their credential, which includes a year of student teaching alongside credentialed teachers. Research shows that more training is correlated with better outcomes for students.

Higher Attrition Rates for TFA Teachers:

Research examining TFA in localities nationwide provide clear evidence that TFA teachers have higher attrition rates than all other types of new teachers. A nationwide study of TFA after their fifth year, only 27.8% were still teaching, compared to the 50% estimated for new teachers across all types of schools. Similar studies in Houston and New York found the attrition rate to be 85% after just three years. Research also shows that on average it takes teachers three years to become proficient.

High teacher turnover creates a revolving door that forces schools to spend precious resources on finding new teachers to replace TFA teachers who leave the profession. Adding to existing financial strains, school districts pay TFA up to \$5,000 for each Corps member – this payment, or finder's fee, is unique to TFA. On top of this fee, school districts must still maintain a human resources department that recruits, screens, interviews, and places all other new teacher candidates.

Who does TFA really help?

A 2014 study of Los Angeles TFA teachers found the majority of TFA Corps members come from privileged backgrounds in terms of race and social class (white middle class), who enter TFA as an interim job that provides time to think through their long-term goals.

STATUS

Assembly Appropriations Committee – hearing date pending

SUPPORT

California Federation of Teachers
California Teachers Association
California NAACP

El Rancho Unified School District
The Network for Public Education
League of United Latin American Citizens

CONTACT

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