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SENATE BILL NO. 168

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

(Proposed by the Senate Committee on Finance
on February 5, 2014)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Senator Stanley)

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 22.1-289.3, relating to grants for teachers relocating to qualified schools.*

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 22.1-289.3 as follows:

§ 22.1-289.3. Teacher Relocation Incentive Grant Fund and Program.

A. As used in this section:

"Fund" means the Teacher Relocation Incentive Grant Fund.

"Grant" means a grant issued pursuant to the Teacher Relocation Incentive Grant Program established by this section.

"Qualified school" means a public elementary or secondary school in the Commonwealth that (i) has at least 40 percent of its students qualify for free or reduced lunch or (ii) is in a locality with a population of 50,000 or less.

"Qualified teacher" means a public elementary or secondary school teacher licensed pursuant to § 22.1-299 who is employed at a qualified school and was not employed at a qualified school during the previous school year.

B. There is hereby created in the state treasury a special nonreverting fund to be known as the Teacher Relocation Incentive Grant Fund. The Fund shall be established on the books of the Comptroller. All funds as may be appropriated by the General Assembly and any gifts, grants, bequests, or donations from public or private sources shall be paid into the state treasury and credited to the Fund. Interest earned on moneys in the Fund shall remain in the Fund and be credited to it. Any moneys remaining in the Fund, including interest thereon, at the end of each fiscal year shall not revert to the general fund but shall remain in the Fund. Moneys in the Fund shall be used solely for the purposes of awarding grants to qualified teachers at qualified schools. Expenditures and disbursements from the Fund shall be made by the State Treasurer on warrants issued by the Comptroller upon written request signed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

C. Beginning January 1, 2015, any qualified teacher may apply for a grant from the Fund. Grants shall be issued in the order that each completed eligible application is received. Grants shall be approved beginning with fiscal year 2015-2016. The Department shall not approve more than an aggregate of \$1 million in grants pursuant to this section during any fiscal year of the Commonwealth. Grants shall be in an amount equal to \$5,000 and shall not exceed \$5,000 per qualified teacher per year. In the event that the amount of eligible grants requested and approved by the Department in a fiscal year exceeds the funds available in the Fund, such grants shall be paid in the next fiscal year in which funds are available. The Department shall develop guidelines implementing the provisions of this section and setting forth the requirements of qualifying for a grant. Such guidelines shall be exempt from the provisions of the Administrative Process Act (§ 2.2-4000 et seq.). The Department shall create the necessary application forms and make them available on the Department's website.