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HOUSE BILL NO. 860

Offered January 12, 2022
Prefiled January 12, 2022

A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Chapter 6 of Title 23.1 an article numbered 8, consisting of sections numbered 23.1-643 through 23.1-647, relating to Teacher Training Corps.

Patrons—Reid, Simonds, Bourne and Maldonado

Referred to Committee on Education

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Chapter 6 of Title 23.1 an article numbered 8, consisting of sections numbered 23.1-643 through 23.1-647, as follows:

Article 8.

Teacher Training Corps.

§ 23.1-643. Definitions.

As used in this article, unless the context requires a different meaning:

"Commission" means the Teacher Training Corps Commission created pursuant to § 23.1-646.

"Department" means the Department of Education.

"Fund" means the Teaching Training Corps Scholarship Fund created pursuant to § 23.1-645.

"High-need school" or "high-need public school" has the same meaning as set forth in 20 U.S.C. § 1021(11)(A).

"Participating institution" means Longwood University, Norfolk State University, Radford University, and Virginia Commonwealth University.

"Program" means the Teaching Training Corps Scholarship Program created pursuant to § 23.1-645.

"School board" means the school board that governs a school division.

§ 23.1-644. Teacher Training Corps; purpose.

The Teacher Training Corps is established for the purpose of attracting and retaining public elementary and secondary school teachers in school divisions in the Commonwealth by increasing the interest of and affordability for students enrolled at participating institutions to obtain teaching degrees and certifications and requiring such students to fill teacher positions for specified periods of time and meet other requirements set out in this article.

§ 23.1-645. Teacher Training Corps Scholarship Fund and Program established; administration; criteria.

A. There is hereby created in the state treasury a special nonreverting fund to be known as the Teacher Training Corps Scholarship Fund. The Fund shall be established on the books of the Comptroller. All moneys appropriated by the General Assembly, and from any other sources, public or private, 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 disbursing moneys to participating institutions for the award of scholarships to students pursuant to the Teacher Training Corps Scholarship Program established in subsection B. 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 chairman of the Commission.

B. There is hereby established a Teacher Training Corps Scholarship Program for the purpose of disbursing moneys from the Fund to participating institutions for the award of scholarships to students as set forth in this section, including stipends as described in subsection I.

C. Moneys from the Fund shall fully fund 25 Teacher Training Corps scholarships each year per participating institution to students attending the participating institutions. The Commission shall establish an application process for students who have been accepted for admission to such institutions to apply to the Program.

D. The Program shall accept applications from any student participating in any academic programs in the areas of public elementary and secondary school education offered by participating institutions.

E. The Commission shall determine 25 awardees and five alternates for each participating institution from students who have been accepted for admission to such institutions and applied to the Program. Each student accepted to and wishing to participate in the Program shall enter into a contract with the Commonwealth that outlines the terms, conditions, and responsibilities of the student, the Commonwealth in its administration of the Program, and the participating institution. Each student shall

be at least 18 years of age at the time that the contract is signed. In the event that a student terminates his contract prior to completing the Program, whether during completion of an academic program or certification or during the teaching period, all expenses paid for by the Commonwealth shall be converted to a student loan to be paid back by the student. Upon successful execution of a contract between the student and the Commonwealth, a scholarship awarded under the Fund shall cover the full expenses of tuition, room and board, and other required fees for a student to attend a participating institution and complete a degree or certification eligible for the Program as described in subsection D. A student shall be permitted to live off campus and receive the full scholarship funds, but the Commonwealth shall not be required to cover more than the cost of living on campus to such student. In order for the Commonwealth to pay for additional years to complete an academic program or certification beyond the standard number of years required to complete such academic program or certification, the Commission may elect to pay for such additional time required for the student to complete his degree and add such additional time to the time that the student is required to teach upon graduation under the Program. A contract under this subsection shall include a provision that each student is required to complete one year of teaching at a high-need public school in the Commonwealth per each year of school paid for by the Commonwealth.

F. Scholarships shall automatically renew each academic year so long as the student (i) maintains a grade point average of at least 2.75 on a scale of 4.0 or its equivalent, (ii) maintains satisfactory academic progress toward receiving a degree eligible for the Program, and (iii) is not subject to any academic sanctions or other character and fitness problems as determined by the Commission.

G. Departure from the Program before a student's completion of a degree eligible for the Program or completion of the required teaching period shall result in the student being liable to the Commonwealth for all funds expended from the Fund up until the point of departing from the Program. Such funds shall be converted to a student loan to be paid back by the student.

H. The Department, the Council, and participating institutions shall establish a support program at each participating institution that shall include cohort work groups for participating students, field trips, additional professional development and continuing education programs, community outreach, and other opportunities that encourage students to understand the value and importance of becoming a teacher and to help ensure that students successfully complete the Program.

I. The Commission, the Council, and participating institutions shall, working with local school boards, develop an experiential learning program to prepare participating students for all aspects of their future careers as teachers, and, in doing so, shall establish guidelines for participation in the program and the payment of a stipend for each participating student.

J. Upon successfully graduating from a participating institution, each student shall be paid the starting salary for a teacher in the school division where he is employed. The starting salary shall be paid for by the local school board.

§ 23.1-646. Teacher Training Corps Commission established.

A. There is hereby established the Teacher Training Corps Commission (the Commission) in the executive branch of state government for the purpose of (i) developing a process for prospective teachers to apply to the Program; (ii) developing a contract that prospective teachers will sign before entering college under the Program; (iii) providing an annual report to the General Assembly on the status of the Program; (iv) making recommendations for Program improvements regarding pay, recruiting approach, pay structure, turnover, retention efforts, and number of needed positions; and (v) ensuring that students in the Program meet all qualifications for the college or university program to which they have applied. The Commission shall administer the Program and shall carry out the goals and purposes of the Program set forth in this article.

B. The Commission shall have a total membership of 12 members that shall consist of four legislative members and eight nonlegislative members. The Commission shall elect a chairman and vice-chairman from among its members. The Commission shall include one representative from the Department, to be appointed by the Governor, subject to confirmation by the General Assembly; one representative from the Council, to be appointed by the Governor, subject to confirmation by the General Assembly; one representative from the Virginia School Board Association, to be appointed by the Governor, subject to confirmation by the General Assembly; one representative from Longwood University, to be appointed by the Governor, subject to confirmation by the General Assembly; one representative from Norfolk State University, to be appointed by the Governor, subject to confirmation by the General Assembly; one representative from Radford University to be appointed by the Governor, subject to confirmation by the General Assembly; one representative from Virginia Commonwealth University, to be appointed by the Governor, subject to confirmation by the General Assembly; one educator certified in the Commonwealth that still serves as a teacher in the classroom, to be appointed by the Governor, subject to confirmation by the General Assembly; one member of the Senate Committee on Education and Health or his designee, to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules; and three members of the House Committee on Education or their designees, to be appointed by

the Speaker of the House of Delegates in accordance with the principles of proportional representation contained in the Rules of the House of Delegates. Members of the Commission shall serve terms of four years and may be reappointed. Appointments to fill vacancies, other than by expiration of a term, shall be for the unexpired terms. Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments.

C. The Commission shall meet quarterly, and the chairman and vice-chairman shall establish a meeting schedule on an annual basis. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum. Legislative members of the Commission shall receive compensation as provided in § 30-19.12, and all members shall be reimbursed for all reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties as provided in §§ 2.2-2813 and 2.2-2825. Funding for the costs of compensation and expenses of the members shall be provided by the Fund.

D. The Council shall provide staff support to the Commission. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Commission, upon request.

§ 23.1-647. Hiring; tracking compliance.

A. All issues related to applications and employment shall be between students and the school divisions to which they apply and not the Commission.

B. The Commission shall establish a process for tracking students' compliance with the Program after graduation. As part of tracking such compliance, each student in the Program shall be required to submit evidence that the school at which he is employed is a high-need school.

2. That the members of the Teacher Training Corps Commission (the Commission) established pursuant to § 23.1-646 of the Code of Virginia, as created by this act, shall be appointed no later than September 1, 2022, and that on or after September 1, 2022, the Commission shall begin meeting to establish the parameters for the Teacher Training Corps Scholarship Program (the Program) as set forth in § 23.1-645 of the Code of Virginia, as created by this act, and to award the first scholarships pursuant to the Program prior to the beginning of the 2023-2024 academic year.