



Texas Association of School Personnel Administrators

May 17, 2011

To: Honorable Senator Shapiro and Members of the Senate Education Committee

My name is Melva Cárdenas, and I am the Executive Director of the Texas Association of School Personnel Administrators (TASPA). TASPA is a professional association representing Texas public school human resources (HR) administrators and support staff whose mission is to develop quality leadership in human resource services in order to impact and enhance public education, thereby supporting student success. On behalf of the TASPA Executive Board and its membership, I am submitting testimony in support of HB 1334.

With the recent personnel cuts at the Texas Education Agency (TEA), particularly in the Division of Educator Certification and Standards, we are concerned that the timeliness of services provided by this Division will be significantly impacted. Within the Division there are three departments: Educator Certification, Educator Standards, and Investigations/Fingerprinting. It is my understanding that at least 91 TEA employees were laid off. Of the 91, 16 employees in the Division of Educator Certification and Standards were released, including:

- 7 employees in Educator Certification,
- 7 employees in Investigations/Fingerprinting,
- the Director of Educator Certification, and
- the Deputy Associate Commissioner of Educator Certification and Standards.

This is the one, and probably the only, Division at TEA that provides a service to every educator in the State of Texas (teachers, school counselors, educational diagnosticians, campus administrators, superintendents, educational aides), every school district and every educator preparation program.

Prior to my employment with TASPA, I served as the TEA Director of Educator Certification; therefore, I understand the magnitude of their duties, responsibilities and work load. The volume of calls, chats, email inquiries, out-of-state and out-of country credential reviews, permit applications, criminal history reviews, and other services will not decrease and with the Educator Certification staff reduced by nearly 50% (and 25% of the entire Division), there is a high probability that the ability to respond in a timely manner will be difficult.

The passage of HB 1334 is necessary in order to avoid adverse consequences to educators, school districts, and ultimately, the students. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Melva V. Cárdenas
Executive Director