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For Immediate Release - Senator Joyce Waddell's Teacher Licensure and Energy Bill

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Sent: Friday, January 19, 2018 3:33 PM


 From the Office of Sen. Joyce Waddell, NC Senate
 Mecklenburg County


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, January 19, 2018

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Teacher Licensure and Energy Bill

Charlotte, NC – On January 9, the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee held a meeting in Raleigh to study the process of teacher licensure in North Carolina. A teaching license is required to teach in traditional public schools. In charter schools, at least 50 percent of the teachers must be licensed. Over the last few years, some teachers raised concerns about waiting six months to get hired due to state delays in processing teacher licenses. The delays impact principals' ability to hire new teachers. Some teachers receive less pay working as substitute teachers until their paperwork is processed.

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (DPI) performed a recent internal audit which discovered multiple issues that slow down the application process. The audit found technical challenges, communication problems, and weak reporting capabilities of the online application system. For instance, applicants could create new log-in accounts every time they returned to an online application, which resulted in duplicate entries for the same social security number. According to the Deputy State Superintendent, about 15 staff at DPI were processing 5,000 to 8,000 applications each month. The Department's goal is to decrease the wait time to six to eight weeks.

"Some teachers are eager to start their careers working in schools. There should be no delays in issuing teaching licenses. The application process should be as efficient as possible. We will continue to monitor the issues from the audit and develop methods that will help the delaying process," said Senator Joyce Waddell.

The Joint Legislative Commission on Energy Policy also met on January 9 to receive an update on House Bill 589, Competitive Energy Solutions for NC, which was signed into law on July 27, 2017. The legislation allows homeowners and businesses to ease the cost burden by leasing solar panels on their roofs. The bill also included a controversial moratorium on wind farms receiving a state permit through Dec. 31, 2018. Maps and data must be collected to help legislators determine the extent and scope of military operations and where energy infrastructure poses a threat to its readiness and training capabilities. The bill authorized a \$150,000 contract to support the maps. AECOM, an engineering firm with offices in Raleigh and Charlotte, was awarded the contract to develop a work plan that will create base maps, incorporate recommendations from military consultants, and create the final product. The plan must be completed by May 31, 2018.

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