ENGROSSED HOUSE
BILL NO. 1806

By: Staggs and Turner of the House

and

Wilcoxson of the Senate

An Act relating to schools; amending Section 8, Chapter 322, O.S.L. 1995, as amended by Section 4, Chapter 344, O.S.L. 1997 (70 O.S. Supp. 1998, Section 6-187), which relates to competency examinations of teachers; deleting certain educational hours requirement for examination; providing an effective date; and declaring an emergency.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY Section 8, Chapter 322, O.S.L. 1995, as amended by Section 4, Chapter 344, O.S.L. 1997 (70 O.S. Supp. 1998, Section 6-187), is amended to read as follows:

Section 6-187. A. A competency examination shall be adopted by the Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation for the general education, professional education and various subject areas and grade levels for purposes of ensuring academic achievement and competency of each teacher candidate or teacher in the subject area the person is seeking licensure or certification to teach which shall also include licensure or certification as an administrator, as prescribed by the State Board of Education.

The Commission, consistent with the purposes of this section, shall promulgate rules and procedures to guarantee the confidentiality of examinations.

B. ~~Following completion of the junior year or after having completed ninety (90) college credit hours, each teacher candidate shall be eligible to take the examination.~~ No teacher candidate shall be eligible for licensing until successfully completing the

competency examination. Certification shall be limited to areas of approval in which the licensed or certified teacher has successfully completed the examination. Testing for certification for subjects in which a teacher candidate or teacher is seeking a minor teaching assignment or an endorsement to teach shall be limited to the specific subject area test.

A teacher candidate or teacher may take the general education, professional education or subject area portions of the examination subject to any limit imposed by the Commission.

C. A teacher may be certified in as many areas as the teacher meets the necessary requirements provided by law and has successfully completed the subject area portion of the examination.

D. The Commission shall offer the first competency examination beginning July 1, 1997, but no later than October 1, 1997. Thereafter, the examination shall be offered at least four times per calendar year on dates to be established by the Commission.

E. Nothing in the Oklahoma Teacher Preparation Act shall restrict the right of the State Board of Education to issue an emergency or provisional certificate, as needed. Provided, however, prior to the issuance of an emergency certificate, the local district shall document substantial efforts to employ a teacher who holds a provisional or standard certificate or who is licensed in the teaching profession. In the event a district is unable to hire an individual meeting this criteria, the district shall document efforts to employ an individual with a provisional or standard certificate or with a license in another curricular area with academic preparation in the field of need. Only after these alternatives have been exhausted shall the district be allowed to employ an individual meeting minimum standards as established by the State Board of Education for the issuance of emergency certificates.

SECTION 2. This act shall become effective July 1, 1999.

SECTION 3. It being immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is hereby declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

Passed the House of Representatives the 24th day of February, 1999.

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Speaker of the House of Representatives

Passed the Senate the ____ day of _____, 1999.

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President of the Senate