

Alaska State Legislature

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Representative Lesil McGuire

Chair, Judiciary Committee

HB 551

"An Act relating to the issuance of teacher certificates to and revocation of teacher certificates of persons convicted of felony drug offenses and to the issuance of limited teacher certificates to persons convicted of certain crimes involving a minor and felony drug offenses."

SPONSOR STATEMENT

Children are our most valuable asset and should be allowed to grow and learn in a safe environment free from the influences of drugs and crime. Currently a person who has been convicted of a felony drug offense can apply for and receive a teaching certificate in Alaska. Similarly a person who currently has a certificate can be convicted of a felony drug offense and continue to teach Alaska's children. By allowing this to continue we are setting a bad example for our children in regards to drug use and are putting them at considerable risk.

[HB 551](#) addresses this issue by requiring the Department of Education revoke the teaching certificate of a person convicted of felony drug charges and also disallows a person from being granted such a certificate if they have been convicted of these charges.

While this bill was being drafted it was also noticed that people applying for a limited teaching certificate weren't held to the same standards as regular teachers in regards to their criminal history. HB 551 corrects this oversight by requiring people applying for a limited teaching certificate to submit to a criminal background check prior to receiving the certificate.

By making these simple, but effective changes, HB 551 promotes a positive educational environment while keeping Alaska's children safe.