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Rep. Dale Kildee (D-MI) Opening Statement at the Hearing on Alternative Teacher Certification Programs

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Below are the prepared remarks of U.S. Rep. Dale Kildee (D-MI), the senior Democrat on the House Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education for the hearing on alternative teacher certification programs.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

I also want to thank our distinguished witness panel for their participation in today's hearing. As a former teacher myself, I believe the conversation about teacher quality is an important one.

I look forward to your insights on the benefits and challenges of alternative certification, and how it can be used as a tool to provide a quality education for all students.

Alternative certification of teachers may provide one option to increase the supply of teachers, especially in subject shortage areas and high-needs schools. However, we must ensure teachers have both subject expertise and proper teaching methodology.

States must ensure that alternative certification programs are of high-quality and that teachers demonstrate sufficient pedagogical and academic knowledge before entering the classroom.

As I said, alternative certification is only one tool. It is not the answer by itself. We must focus on the issue of teacher quality at large. Both teachers who took the traditional route and those who went through alternative certification need resources and support to be successful in the classroom.

We must ensure quality and accountability for both types of programs through data systems that measure effectiveness. Additionally, teachers need high-quality pre-service training, targeted professional development, mentoring, and the support of parents and community partners.

All of these strategies are necessary to create a system where teachers are ready when they enter the classroom and have the encouragement to grow and improve. What problems should we be concerned with as we consider the hoped for benefits of alternative certification?

This is one question I hope to pursue in this hearing. I want to thank the Chairman for calling today's hearing, and look forward to the discussion.

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