

Senate Education Committee

Trevor Currier 271-4151

HB 1795-FN, requiring criminal history record checks for the renewal of teaching licenses.

Hearing Date: March 24, 2026

Time Opened: 9:21 a.m.

Time Closed: 9:28 a.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Ward, Sullivan, Prentiss and Altschiller

Members of the Committee Absent : Senator Abbas

Bill Analysis: This bill requires individuals seeking renewal of a teaching credential submit a criminal history release form to the department of education as a condition of renewing their credential. The bill also adds neglect to the criminal history record check.

Sponsors:

Rep. Noble

Rep. Freeman

Rep. Litchfield

Who supports the bill: Representative Lisa Freeman (Belknap 8), Steve Appleby (NH Department of Education), and Daniel Richardson.

Who opposes the bill: Cory Stone, John Stanley, Elizabeth Lewis, Janet Robertson, Linda Burnap, Amy Erickson, Debra Merrick, Deborah Fexis, Abigail Mather, Richard DeMark, Priscilla Dube, Susan Fanburg, Cassandra Curtis, Lois Cote, Ruth O'Neal, Katherine Pawley, and Stephanie Burnham.

Who is neutral on the bill:

Summary of testimony presented in support:

Representative Lisa Freeman

- Representative Freeman introduced House Bill 1795 on behalf of Representative Noble.
- Representative Freeman stated that this bill requires teachers to submit a criminal history release upon renewing their licensure.
- She added that this bill passed unanimously through the committee in the House of Representatives and on the consent calendar.

Steve Appleby, New Hampshire Department of Education

- Mr. Appleby explained that the department currently requires a criminal history check only during initial licensing. He added that if an educator changes employment to another district, the educator would undergo a background check. This bill would require all teachers to undergo a criminal history check every 3 years when renewing their license.
- Mr. Appleby stated that the department surveyed all 50 states, and of the 27 that responded, all 27 had legislation requiring criminal history checks as a condition for license renewal.
- He mentioned that if a teacher never leaves their district to teach elsewhere, their criminal history is never reviewed again.
- Mr. Appleby explained that this bill adds the word neglect to the statute, making the department consider both child abuse and child neglect rather than only the former.
- Senator Prentiss asked if this check would remain compliant with FBI regulations. Mr. Appleby responded that this check would remain a FBI compliant background check.
- Senator Prentiss asked whether an educator's criminal history is only checked once under current law. Mr. Appleby replied that if a teacher stays in the same district during their entire career, they would never need to undergo another check.
- Senator Altschiller inquired about the benefit of including neglect in the findings in line twenty-one. Mr. Appleby responded that when abuse is checked, neglect is not considered, and the department does not feel that anyone who neglects their children should be in the role of educator.
- Senator Altschiller asked whether adding child neglect creates a way to check the Bureau of Elderly Affairs database for neglect. Mr. Appleby replied that the Department has discussed this and is currently only familiar with the foster parent list, but would consider legislation in the future to include it.
- Senator Altschiller inquired whether the RSA is only applicable to foster parents and not kinship guardians. Mr. Appleby confirmed that it is. He also mentioned that if future legislation were to include elder neglect, he believes the Department could manage it.
- Senator Altschiller asked if there are currently MOUs with Maine and Vermont to assist with background checks. He mentioned that we already have one with Massachusetts, and the department is working on agreements with Maine and Vermont.

Summary of testimony presented in opposition: None.

Neutral Information Presented: None.

TC

Date Hearing Report completed: March 26, 2026