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Statement prepared by the CAMTE Advocacy Committee and delivered by
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Good morning, I am Joanne Rossi Becker, professor of mathematics at SJSU and President of the CA Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators (CAMTE). CAMTE represents professionals who provide pre-service and in-service education for mathematics teachers at all levels, and we appreciate the opportunity to share our thoughts about this agenda item.

There is overwhelming consensus that the FLM is missing the target with regard to its intended goal--that is, credentialing more appropriately qualified math teachers. Currently a prospective teacher who earns an FLM through the exam route is required to pass CSET subtests I and II. There is general agreement among mathematicians and mathematics educators that the CSET subtests for math are inadequate in assessing a teacher's depth and breadth of mathematical experience and understanding. Early results of a study being conducted by Dr. Jorgen Berglund at Chico State University indicate that around 50% of those who earned an FLM credential on California State University campuses and met subject matter competence via CSET subtests had taken no more than one or two university-level mathematics courses, and all of those were lower division courses. It seems that there is extremely poor alignment between what is required to pass CSET subtests I and II and what the CTC appropriately requires of the subject matter preparation programs.

Given this situation, we do believe that the Commission's proposal to reduce the number of semester units required in a Subject Matter Preparation program for the Foundational-Level Mathematics credential is a step forward in order to encourage campuses to be able to develop programs that encourage course-taking rather than test-taking for the credential. We just want to make sure that these programs are mathematically robust. It would be challenging to create a program with only 20 units of mathematics that would contain all the mathematics that an FLM credential holder should be taking in order to teach the extent of mathematics that she or he would be credentialed to teach.

Thus the second--and related--major concern that mathematics teacher educators have with the FLM credential is the level of mathematics that an FLM teacher is allowed to teach. As the FLM currently exists, a credential holder is authorized to teach through Algebra II. This is the course that completes the state's A-G requirements in mathematics for high school students who plan to attend college. It is extremely troublesome to many mathematics teacher educators in the state that a teacher as under-prepared as some of those currently earning an FLM credential could be teaching such an important and advanced course. There would be far less resistance to the FLM credential by mathematics teacher educators if the instructional authorization were limited to

Algebra I or Geometry. This more limited scope would be consistent with the authorization provided by the Subject Matter Authorization in Introductory Mathematics, an authorization that requires 32 semester units of mathematics coursework, compared to the FLM's minimum of 20 semester units of mathematics. It seems a bit incongruous for an authorization with fewer required university mathematics courses to permit the credential holder to teach more advanced mathematics courses.

None of these issues is new to the Commission. Within the last two years, these issues have been discussed at Commission meetings, at panel meetings, and in conversations with CTC staff. At more than one Commission meeting during that same time period, the commissioners expressed concern about the confusing nature of the myriad math credentials and authorizations in the state, and noted that a panel should be created to try to make the entire authorization structure more coherent. CAMTE supports the creation of such a panel and the organization's members would be eager to participate.

We know that the Commission shares our desire to credential the most qualified teachers of mathematics possible. We are pleased that we in CAMTE have begun a dialogue with the Commission and CCTC staff and we look forward to strengthening these lines of communication. We are confident that together we will find ways to improve the subject matter competence of those earning Single Subject Teaching Credentials in Mathematics.