

By: Kolkhorst, et al.

S.B. No. 25

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT  
2 relating to support for nursing-related postsecondary education,  
3 including scholarships to nursing students, loan repayment  
4 assistance to nurses and nursing faculty, and grants to nursing  
5 education programs.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

7 SECTION 1. Section 61.655, Education Code, is amended to  
8 read as follows:

9 Sec. 61.655. PURPOSE; ELIGIBILITY. (a) A scholarship  
10 program[~~, matching fund program,~~] or loan repayment program  
11 established under this subchapter shall be established and  
12 administered in a manner that the board determines best promotes  
13 the health care and educational needs of this state.

14 (b) The board may establish multiple categories of persons  
15 to receive scholarships[~~, matching funds,~~] and loan repayments.  
16 The board may include faculty from professional nursing programs  
17 with master's degrees or doctorates among the categories of persons  
18 authorized to receive loan repayments.

19 (c) Each year funds are available, the board shall establish  
20 the categories of persons eligible to receive scholarships[~~,  
21 matching funds,~~] and loan repayments and the criteria for selecting  
22 persons to be assisted under each category. The criteria may  
23 include:

24 (1) scholastic ability and performance;

- 1           (2) financial need;
- 2           (3) the geographical area in which the person is  
3 likely to practice;
- 4           (4) whether the person receives Temporary Assistance  
5 for Needy Families [~~Aid to Families with Dependent Children~~] or  
6 participates in another public welfare program;
- 7           (5) employment by a state agency;
- 8           (6) employment on a nursing school faculty or a  
9 person's intention to seek employment on a nursing school faculty;
- 10          (7) whether the person is practicing in a geographical  
11 area, a practice setting, or an area of practice with an acute  
12 nursing shortage or is likely to practice in such an area;
- 13          (8) the type of certificate or academic degree held or  
14 pursued; or
- 15          (9) any additional factors the board considers  
16 relevant to promoting the health care and educational needs of the  
17 state.

18          SECTION 2. Section 61.656(d), Education Code, is amended to  
19 read as follows:

20          (d) The board shall distribute information about the  
21 scholarship program[~~, matching fund program,~~] and loan repayment  
22 program established under this subchapter to:

- 23           (1) employers of registered nurses or licensed  
24 vocational nurses;
- 25           (2) associations of employers;
- 26           (3) schools and educational programs for registered  
27 nurses or licensed vocational nurses; and

1           (4) professional associations of registered nurses or  
2 licensed vocational nurses.

3           SECTION 3. Section 61.658(b), Education Code, is amended to  
4 read as follows:

5           (b) The board may structure the scholarship program[~~, the~~  
6 ~~matching fund program,~~] and the loan repayment program established  
7 under this subchapter to secure funds available under federal  
8 matching programs.

9           SECTION 4. Section 61.9822, Education Code, is amended to  
10 read as follows:

11           Sec. 61.9822. ELIGIBILITY. To be eligible to receive loan  
12 repayment assistance under this subchapter, a nurse must:

13           (1) apply to the board;

14           (2) at the time of application for repayment  
15 assistance have been employed part-time or full-time for at least  
16 one year as, and be currently employed part-time or full-time as, a  
17 faculty member of a nursing degree program at an institution of  
18 higher education or a private or independent institution of higher  
19 education; and

20           (3) comply with any additional requirements adopted by  
21 board rule.

22           SECTION 5. Sections 61.9823(a) and (b), Education Code, are  
23 amended to read as follows:

24           (a) On qualifying for loan repayment assistance under this  
25 subchapter, a nurse may receive repayment assistance for each year  
26 of part-time or full-time employment as a faculty member of a  
27 nursing degree program at an institution of higher education or

1 private or independent institution of higher education, not to  
2 exceed five years.

3 (b) The board by rule shall determine the maximum amount of  
4 loan repayment assistance received by a nurse under this subchapter  
5 [~~may not exceed \$7,000~~] in any one year. The board shall base the  
6 amount of loan repayment assistance received by a nurse for  
7 part-time employment on the proportion of the number of hours  
8 worked by the nurse to the number of hours worked by a full-time  
9 nurse.

10 SECTION 6. Sections 63.202(f) and (g), Education Code, are  
11 amended to read as follows:

12 (f) Notwithstanding the limitation provided by Subsection  
13 (b), grants awarded under Subsection (c) for the state fiscal  
14 biennium ending on August 31, 2025 [~~2021~~], and the fiscal biennium  
15 ending on August 31, 2027 [~~2023~~], by the Texas Higher Education  
16 Coordinating Board shall be awarded to programs preparing students  
17 for initial licensure as registered nurses or programs preparing  
18 qualified faculty members with a master's or doctoral degree for  
19 the program, including programs at two-year institutions of higher  
20 education, four-year general academic teaching institutions,  
21 health science centers, and independent or private institutions of  
22 higher education, or to the nursing resource section established  
23 under Section 105.002(b), Health and Safety Code. In awarding  
24 grants under this subsection, the coordinating board may:

25 (1) give priority to institutions proposing to address  
26 the shortage of registered nurses by promoting innovation in  
27 education, recruitment, and retention of nursing students and

1 qualified faculty;

2 (2) award grants on a competitive basis;

3 (3) consider the availability of matching funds; and

4 (4) fund a study by the nursing resource section to  
5 evaluate the competencies of clinical judgment and behaviors that  
6 professional nursing students should possess at the time of  
7 graduation.

8 (g) Subsection (f) and this subsection expire September 1,  
9 2027 [~~2023~~].

10 SECTION 7. The following provisions of the Education Code  
11 are repealed:

12 (1) Sections [61.653](#) and [61.657](#); and

13 (2) Section [61.656\(c\)](#).

14 SECTION 8. (a) As soon as practicable after the effective  
15 date of this Act, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board  
16 shall adopt rules necessary to administer the changes in law made by  
17 this Act.

18 (b) The changes in law made by this Act apply beginning with  
19 loan repayment assistance awarded under Subchapter [JJ](#), Chapter [61](#),  
20 Education Code, for the 2024-2025 academic year. Loan repayment  
21 assistance awarded under Subchapter [JJ](#), Chapter [61](#), Education Code,  
22 for an academic year before the 2024-2025 academic year is governed  
23 by the law in effect immediately before the effective date of this  
24 Act, and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

25 SECTION 9. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
26 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
27 provided by Section [39](#), Article III, Texas Constitution. If this

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1 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this

2 Act takes effect September 1, 2023.