

By: Guillen

H.B. No. 4181

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to student loan repayment assistance for certain professionals employed by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 61, Education Code, is amended by adding Subchapter GG to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER GG. LOAN REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE FOR CERTAIN PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES OF TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Sec. 61.9801. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Department" means the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

(2) "Eligible profession" means the profession of social work or psychology or another profession designated by the department because members of that profession are qualified to offer services for which the department has determined a need exists in the department's workforce.

(3) "Eligible professional" means a person who holds an appropriate license or certification required to practice an eligible profession.

Sec. 61.9802. REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE AUTHORIZED. The board shall provide, in accordance with this subchapter and board rules, assistance in the repayment of student loans for eligible professionals who apply and qualify for assistance.

Sec. 61.9803. ELIGIBILITY. To be eligible to receive

1 repayment assistance, an eligible professional must:

2 (1) apply to the board;

3 (2) at the time the eligible professional applies for
4 the assistance, have been employed in the profession on which the
5 professional's eligibility is based for at least one year by the
6 department and be currently employed full-time in that profession
7 by the department; and

8 (3) comply with any other requirements adopted by
9 board rule under this subchapter.

10 Sec. 61.9804. LIMITATION. (a) On qualifying for the
11 assistance, an eligible professional may receive repayment
12 assistance grants for each year of employment by the department,
13 not to exceed five years.

14 (b) The amount of repayment assistance grants that an
15 eligible professional may receive for each year of employment by
16 the department may not exceed 20 percent of the eligible
17 professional's total outstanding principal amount of student loans
18 as of the time the person initially applies for the assistance.

19 Sec. 61.9805. DESIGNATION OF ELIGIBLE PROFESSION. The
20 department shall notify the board, in the time and manner specified
21 by the board, of any profession the department designates as an
22 eligible profession for purposes of this subchapter.

23 Sec. 61.9806. ELIGIBLE LOANS. (a) The board may provide
24 repayment assistance for the repayment of any student loan for
25 education at an institution of higher education, including loans
26 for undergraduate education, received by an eligible professional
27 through any lender.

1 (b) The board may not provide repayment assistance for a
2 student loan that is in default at the time of the eligible
3 professional's application.

4 (c) Each state fiscal biennium, the board shall attempt to
5 provide repayment assistance in amounts sufficient to use all the
6 money appropriated to the board for that biennium for the purpose of
7 providing repayment assistance under this subchapter.

8 Sec. 61.9807. REPAYMENT. (a) The board shall deliver any
9 repayment made under this subchapter in a lump sum payable to the
10 lender or holder of the loan and the eligible professional, or may
11 deliver the repayment directly to the lender or loan holder on
12 behalf of the eligible professional, in accordance with any
13 applicable federal law.

14 (b) A repayment made under this subchapter may be applied to
15 the principal amount of the loan and to any interest that becomes
16 due on the loan.

17 Sec. 61.9808. ADVISORY COMMITTEES. The board may appoint
18 advisory committees to assist the board in administering this
19 subchapter.

20 Sec. 61.9809. ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS. The board may accept
21 gifts, grants, and donations for the purposes of this subchapter.

22 Sec. 61.9810. RULES. (a) The board shall adopt rules
23 necessary for the administration of this subchapter.

24 (b) The board shall distribute a copy of the rules adopted
25 under this section and pertinent information regarding this
26 subchapter to:

27 (1) each institution of higher education;

1 (2) the department; and

2 (3) any appropriate professional association.

3 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2009.