

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the Texas Civil Rights History Teacher Stipend Program.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 21, Education Code, is amended by adding Subchapter P to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER P. TEXAS CIVIL RIGHTS HISTORY TEACHER STIPEND PROGRAM

Sec. 21.751. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Board" means the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

(2) "General academic teaching institution" has the meaning assigned by Section 61.003.

(3) "Program" means the Texas Civil Rights History Teacher Stipend Program.

Sec. 21.752. ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM; STIPEND. (a) In accordance with this subchapter and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board rules adopted in consultation with the agency, the board shall establish the Texas Civil Rights History Teacher Stipend Program to award stipends to persons who:

(1) are experienced classroom teachers;

(2) are enrolled in social science or humanities master's degree programs at general academic teaching institutions;

(3) while in degree programs described by Subdivision (2), perform academic research concerning a local aspect of civil

1 rights history in this state and develop a middle, junior high, or
2 high school curriculum based on that research; and

3 (4) agree to teach for a specified period in a public
4 middle, junior high, or high school in this state.

5 (b) The amount of a stipend under this subchapter for an
6 academic year is equal to the lesser of:

7 (1) the total amount of tuition that the general
8 academic teaching institution in which the stipend recipient is
9 enrolled charges the recipient for that academic year for semester
10 credit hours for which the recipient may, under Subsection (c), use
11 the stipend to pay tuition; or

12 (2) \$10,000.

13 (c) A person may use a stipend under this subchapter only to
14 pay tuition for a semester credit hour that is required for
15 completion of the social science or humanities degree program in
16 which the student is enrolled.

17 Sec. 21.753. ELIGIBILITY. (a) To be eligible to receive a
18 stipend under this subchapter, a person must:

19 (1) at the time the initial stipend is paid, have been
20 employed as a classroom teacher in this state for at least five full
21 school years;

22 (2) be enrolled at a general academic teaching
23 institution in a master's degree program that is considered to be a
24 social science or humanities degree program under board rule; and

25 (3) enter into an agreement with the board as provided
26 by Section 21.756.

27 (b) If in any year the amount of money available for

1 stipends under this subchapter is insufficient to award a stipend
2 to each eligible applicant, the board shall establish criteria to
3 determine which eligible applicants will be granted stipends as the
4 board determines appropriate to further the purposes of this
5 subchapter, including criteria that:

6 (1) are related to the financial need of an applicant;
7 and

8 (2) serve to ensure geographic and ethnic diversity
9 among scholarship recipients.

10 Sec. 21.754. INFORMATION AND APPLICATIONS. (a) The board,
11 in consultation with the agency, shall develop an application for
12 the program.

13 (b) The agency shall distribute the applications and
14 information regarding the program.

15 Sec. 21.755. SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS. (a) The board
16 shall select persons to participate in the program on the basis of
17 applications submitted to the board.

18 (b) Each application must be submitted:

19 (1) in the form and contain the information required
20 by board rule; and

21 (2) in a timely manner.

22 Sec. 21.756. AGREEMENT. (a) To qualify for a stipend under
23 this subchapter, a person must enter into a written agreement with
24 the board as provided by this section. The agreement must:

25 (1) specify the conditions the person must satisfy to
26 receive the stipend award;

27 (2) require the person to enroll at a general academic

1 teaching institution in a master's degree program that is
2 considered to be a social science or humanities degree program
3 under board rule;

4 (3) require the person, while enrolled in a degree
5 program described by Subdivision (2), to:

6 (A) perform academic research that satisfies
7 standards established by board rule on a local aspect of this
8 state's civil rights history; and

9 (B) adapt the research into a format that
10 satisfies State Board of Education rules for inclusion in the
11 public middle, junior high, or high school social studies
12 curriculum required under Section 28.002;

13 (4) require the person to be employed full-time as a
14 classroom teacher in a public middle, junior high, or high school in
15 this state during:

16 (A) the first school year after the person has
17 successfully completed a master's degree program described by
18 Subdivision (2); and

19 (B) the school year following the school year
20 described by Paragraph (A);

21 (5) provide that any stipend award the person receives
22 under this subchapter constitutes an interest-free loan until the
23 person:

24 (A) subject to Section 21.758, satisfies the
25 requirements of the agreement under this section; or

26 (B) is excused from the repayment obligation in
27 accordance with law; and

1 (6) require the person to sign a promissory note
2 acknowledging the conditional nature of the stipend award received
3 and promising to repay any unforgiven amount of that award and
4 reasonable collection costs if the person does not satisfy the
5 applicable conditions and is not excused from the repayment
6 obligation in accordance with law.

7 (b) To satisfy the teaching obligation prescribed by an
8 agreement under this section, a person must teach a subject in the
9 social studies curriculum for not less than four hours each school
10 day.

11 (c) The board shall determine the terms of the promissory
12 note required by Subsection (a)(6). To the extent practicable, the
13 terms must be the same as those applicable to state or federally
14 guaranteed student loans made at the same time.

15 Sec. 21.757. EXCEPTIONS TO TEACHING AND REPAYMENT
16 OBLIGATION. (a) A person is not considered to be in violation of
17 the teaching obligation in the agreement described by Section
18 21.756 during any period in which the participant:

19 (1) is pursuing a full-time course of study related to
20 the field of teaching at an institution of higher education
21 approved by the State Board for Educator Certification;

22 (2) is serving on active duty as a member of the armed
23 forces of the United States;

24 (3) is temporarily totally disabled for a period not
25 to exceed 36 months as established by affidavit of a qualified
26 physician;

27 (4) is unable to secure employment for a period not to

1 exceed 12 months because of care required by a disabled spouse;

2 (5) is seeking and unable to find full-time employment
3 as a teacher in a public middle, junior high, or high school for a
4 single period not to exceed 27 months; or

5 (6) satisfies the provisions of any additional
6 teaching exception adopted by the board.

7 (b) A person is excused from the repayment obligation in a
8 promissory note described by Section 21.756(a)(6) if:

9 (1) the participant becomes permanently totally
10 disabled as established by affidavit of a qualified physician; or

11 (2) the board waives repayment for some or all of the
12 amount owed in the case of extreme hardship to the person.

13 Sec. 21.758. FORGIVENESS OF REPAYMENT OBLIGATION. The
14 board shall forgive repayment of one-third of the total amount of a
15 person's stipend awards under this subchapter for:

16 (1) completing the agreement's academic requirements
17 under Sections 21.756(a)(3)(A) and (B); and

18 (2) teaching for a school year in accordance with the
19 agreement's requirement under Section 21.756(a)(4)(A) or (B) and
20 Section 21.756(b).

21 Sec. 21.759. GRANTS, GIFTS, AND DONATIONS. In addition to
22 money appropriated by the legislature, the board may solicit and
23 accept grants, gifts, and donations from any public or private
24 source for the purposes of this subchapter.

25 Sec. 21.760. RULES. (a) The board, in consultation with
26 the agency, shall adopt rules to administer this subchapter.

27 (b) The State Board of Education shall adopt rules

1 establishing requirements for the format of research adapted to
2 enable inclusion into the public middle, junior high, or high
3 school social studies curriculum.

4 SECTION 2. Not later than December 31, 2009, the Texas
5 Higher Education Coordinating Board, the State Board of Education,
6 and the Texas Education Agency shall adopt rules for the Texas Civil
7 Rights History Teacher Stipend Program under Subchapter P, Chapter
8 21, Education Code, as added by this Act.

9 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
10 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
11 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
12 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
13 Act takes effect September 1, 2009.