

By: Van de Putte

S.B. No. 1141

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to student loan repayment assistance for speech-language pathologists or audiologists employed by a public school or as faculty members of certain programs at institutions of higher education.

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

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

SUBCHAPTER FF. REPAYMENT OF CERTAIN SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST AND AUDIOLOGIST EDUCATION LOANS

Sec. 61.9801. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Audiologist" means a person licensed as an audiologist under Chapter 401, Occupations Code.

(2) "Communicative disorders program" means:

(A) a graduate degree program in audiology or speech-language pathology accredited by the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology; or

(B) an undergraduate degree program that prepares and qualifies a student to apply for admission to a graduate degree program described by Paragraph (A).

(3) "Public school" means a public preschool or primary or secondary school in this state.

(4) "Speech-language pathologist" means a person licensed as a speech-language pathologist under Chapter 401,

1 Occupations Code.

2 Sec. 61.9802. REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE AUTHORIZED. The board
3 shall provide, in accordance with this subchapter and board rules,
4 assistance in the repayment of student loans for speech-language
5 pathologists and audiologists who apply and qualify for assistance.

6 Sec. 61.9803. ELIGIBILITY. (a) To be eligible to receive
7 repayment assistance, a speech-language pathologist or an
8 audiologist must:

9 (1) apply to the board; and

10 (2) at the time the speech-language pathologist or
11 audiologist applies for the assistance:

12 (A) have been employed as a speech-language
13 pathologist or as an audiologist, as applicable, for at least one
14 year by, and be currently employed full-time in that capacity by, a
15 public school; or

16 (B) have been employed as a faculty member of a
17 communicative disorders program at an institution of higher
18 education or private or independent institution of higher education
19 for at least one year, and be currently employed full-time in that
20 capacity at such an institution.

21 (b) The board by rule may provide for repayment assistance
22 on a pro rata basis for speech-language pathologists and
23 audiologists employed part-time by a public school or by an
24 institution of higher education or private or independent
25 institution of higher education.

26 Sec. 61.9804. LIMITATION. (a) On qualifying for the
27 assistance, a speech-language pathologist or an audiologist may

1 receive repayment assistance grants for each year of employment,
2 not to exceed five years, by:

3 (1) a public school; or

4 (2) a communicative disorders program at an
5 institution of higher education or private or independent
6 institution of higher education.

7 (b) The total amount of repayment assistance grants
8 received by a speech-language pathologist or an audiologist under
9 this subchapter may not exceed, for each applicable year of
10 employment:

11 (1) for an eligible recipient who holds a master's
12 degree but not a doctoral degree, \$6,000; or

13 (2) for an eligible recipient who holds a doctoral
14 degree, \$9,000.

15 Sec. 61.9805. ELIGIBLE LOANS. (a) The board may provide
16 repayment assistance for the repayment of any student loan for
17 education at any public or private institution of higher education,
18 including loans for undergraduate education, received by a
19 speech-language pathologist or an audiologist through any lender.

20 (b) Each state fiscal biennium, the board shall attempt to
21 provide repayment assistance in amounts sufficient to use all the
22 money appropriated to the board for that biennium for the purpose of
23 providing repayment assistance under this subchapter.

24 Sec. 61.9806. REPAYMENT. (a) After each year of
25 employment for which a speech-language pathologist or audiologist
26 is eligible to receive a repayment assistance grant under this
27 subchapter, the coordinating board shall deliver any repayment made

1 under this subchapter in a lump sum payable:

2 (1) to both the speech-language pathologist or
3 audiologist and the lender or other holder of the loan; or

4 (2) directly to the lender or other holder of the loan,
5 on behalf of the speech-language pathologist or audiologist.

6 (b) A repayment made under this subchapter may be applied to
7 both the principal amount of the loan and to interest on the loan.

8 Sec. 61.9807. ADVISORY COMMITTEES. The board may appoint
9 advisory committees to assist the board in administering this
10 subchapter.

11 Sec. 61.9808. ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS. The board may accept
12 gifts, grants, and donations for the purposes of this subchapter.

13 Sec. 61.9809. RULES. (a) The board shall adopt rules
14 necessary for the administration of this subchapter.

15 (b) The board shall distribute a copy of the rules adopted
16 under this section and pertinent information regarding this
17 subchapter to:

18 (1) each appropriate institution of higher education
19 or private or independent institution of higher education;

20 (2) any appropriate state agency; and

21 (3) any appropriate professional association.

22 SECTION 2. This Act does not make an appropriation. A
23 provision in this Act that creates a new governmental program,
24 creates a new entitlement, or imposes a new duty on a governmental
25 entity is not mandatory during a fiscal period for which the
26 legislature has not made a specific appropriation to implement the
27 provision.

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