

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 graduate programs at public 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 graduate degree program in audiology or speech-language pathology accredited by the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology.

(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, Occupations Code.

Sec. 61.9802. REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE AUTHORIZED. The board shall provide, in accordance with this subchapter and board rules,

1 assistance in the repayment of student loans for speech-language
2 pathologists and audiologists who apply and qualify for assistance.

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

6 (1) apply to the board; and

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

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

13 (B) have been employed as a faculty member of a
14 communicative disorders program at an institution of higher
15 education for at least one year, and be currently employed
16 full-time in that capacity at such an institution.

17 (b) The board by rule may provide for repayment assistance
18 on a pro rata basis for speech-language pathologists and
19 audiologists employed part-time by a public school or institution
20 of higher education.

21 Sec. 61.9804. LIMITATION. (a) On qualifying for the
22 assistance, a speech-language pathologist or an audiologist may
23 receive repayment assistance grants for each year of employment,
24 not to exceed five years, by:

25 (1) a public school; or

26 (2) a communicative disorders program at an
27 institution of higher education.

1 (b) The amount of repayment assistance grants that a
2 speech-language pathologist or an audiologist may receive for each
3 year of employment by a public school or a communicative disorders
4 program at an institution of higher education may not exceed 20
5 percent of the speech-language pathologist's or audiologist's total
6 principal amount of student loans.

7 (c) The total amount of repayment assistance grants
8 received by a speech-language pathologist or an audiologist under
9 this subchapter may not exceed \$30,000 for an eligible recipient
10 who holds a master's degree but not a doctoral degree, or \$45,000
11 for an eligible recipient who holds a doctoral degree.

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

17 (b) The board may not provide repayment assistance for a
18 student loan that is in default at the time of the speech-language
19 pathologist's or audiologist's application.

20 (c) 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) The board shall deliver any
25 repayment made under this subchapter in a lump sum payable to the
26 lender and the speech-language pathologist or audiologist, in
27 accordance with any applicable federal law.

1 (b) A repayment made under this subchapter may be applied
2 only to the principal amount of the loan.

3 Sec. 61.9807. ADVISORY COMMITTEES. The board may appoint
4 advisory committees to assist the board in administering this
5 subchapter.

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

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

10 (b) The board shall distribute a copy of the rules adopted
11 under this section and pertinent information regarding this
12 subchapter to:

- 13 (1) each institution of higher education;
14 (2) any appropriate state agency; and
15 (3) any appropriate professional association.

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