

By: Van de Putte

S.B. No. 620

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 II to read as follows:

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

Sec. 61.9811. 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 students 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. 61.9812. 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. 61.9813. 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 institution  
24 of higher education.

25 Sec. 61.9814. LIMITATION. (a) On qualifying for the  
26 assistance, a speech-language pathologist or an audiologist may  
27 receive repayment assistance grants for each year of employment,

not to exceed five years, by:

(1) a public school; or

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

(b) For each applicable year of employment described by Subsection (a), the total amount of repayment assistance grants received by a speech-language pathologist or an audiologist under this subchapter may not exceed:

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

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

Sec. 61.9815. ELIGIBLE LOANS. The board may provide repayment assistance for the repayment of any student loan for graduate-level education at any public or private institution of higher education in or outside of this state received by an eligible speech-language pathologist or audiologist through any lender.

Sec. 61.9816. REPAYMENT. (a) The board shall deliver any repayment made under this subchapter in a lump sum payable to:

(1) the lender and the speech-language pathologist or audiologist, in accordance with any applicable federal law; or

(2) the lender or other holder of the loan on behalf of the speech-language pathologist or audiologist.

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

Sec. 61.9817. ADVISORY COMMITTEES. The board may appoint

1 advisory committees to assist the board in administering this  
2 subchapter.

3 Sec. 61.9818. PROGRAM FUNDING. (a) The program is funded  
4 only from appropriations made specifically to fund the program and  
5 from gifts and grants. The board shall attempt to provide repayment  
6 assistance in each state fiscal biennium in amounts sufficient to  
7 use all amounts appropriated for the program in that biennium.

8 (b) The board may solicit and accept gifts and grants for  
9 the purposes of this subchapter.

10 Sec. 61.9819. RULES. (a) The board shall adopt rules  
11 necessary for the administration of this subchapter.

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

15 (1) each appropriate institution of higher education  
16 or private or independent institution of higher education;

17 (2) any appropriate state agency; and

18 (3) any appropriate professional association.

19 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2013.