

By: Hinojosa

S.B. No. 1258

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to improving access to nursing education programs.

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

SECTION 1. Section 51.762(a), Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a) The board, with the assistance of an advisory committee composed of representatives of general academic teaching institutions, junior college districts, public state colleges, and public technical institutes, and with the consultation of all institutions of higher education that admit freshman-level students:

(1) shall adopt by rule:

(A) a common admission application form for use by a person seeking admission as a freshman student to a general academic teaching institution; ~~and~~

(B) an electronic common admission application form for use by a person seeking admission as a freshman student to an institution of higher education that admits freshman-level students, other than a general academic teaching institution; and

(C) a common admission application form for use by a person seeking admission as a freshman student to a nursing education program at an institution of higher education; and

(2) may adopt by rule a printed format common admission application form for use by a person seeking admission as

1 a freshman student to an institution of higher education that
2 admits freshman-level students, other than a general academic
3 teaching institution.

4 SECTION 2. Section 61.026, Education Code, is amended to
5 read as follows:

6 Sec. 61.026. COMMITTEES AND ADVISORY COMMITTEES. (a) The
7 chairman may appoint committees from the board's membership as the
8 chairman [~~he~~] or the board may find necessary from time to time.
9 The board may appoint advisory committees from outside its
10 membership as it may deem necessary.

11 (b) If the board directs an advisory committee to assist the
12 board in exercising its authority under Section 61.051(j) regarding
13 an off-campus course in nursing education, including clinical
14 coursework, the board shall require the advisory committee to
15 include or consult with one or more for-profit career schools
16 offering nursing education courses in the area where the course is
17 to be offered.

18 SECTION 3. Chapter 61, Education Code, is amended by adding
19 Subchapter II to read as follows:

20 SUBCHAPTER II. NURSING FACULTY LOAN REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

21 Sec. 61.9821. REPAYMENT AUTHORIZED. The board shall
22 establish and administer a program to provide, in accordance with
23 this subchapter and board rules, assistance in the repayment of
24 student loans for nurses who:

25 (1) are serving on the faculties of nursing degree
26 programs at institutions of higher education or private or
27 independent institutions of higher education in positions that

1 require an advanced degree in professional nursing; and

2 (2) apply and qualify for the assistance.

3 Sec. 61.9822. ELIGIBILITY. To be eligible to receive loan
4 repayment assistance under this subchapter, a nurse must:

5 (1) apply to the board;

6 (2) at the time of application for repayment
7 assistance have been employed full-time for at least one year as,
8 and be currently employed full-time as, a faculty member of a
9 nursing degree program at an institution of higher education or a
10 private or independent institution of higher education; and

11 (3) comply with any additional requirements adopted by
12 board rule.

13 Sec. 61.9823. LIMITATIONS. (a) On qualifying for loan
14 repayment assistance under this subchapter, a nurse may receive
15 repayment assistance for each year of full-time employment as a
16 faculty member of a nursing degree program at an institution of
17 higher education or private or independent institution of higher
18 education, not to exceed five years.

19 (b) The amount of loan repayment assistance received by a
20 nurse under this subchapter may not exceed \$5,000 in any one year.

21 (c) The total amount of loan repayment assistance provided
22 under this subchapter may not exceed the total amount of gifts and
23 grants accepted by the board for the repayment assistance,
24 legislative appropriations for the repayment assistance, and other
25 funds available to the board for the repayment assistance,
26 including any money reallocated under Section 61.9826.

27 Sec. 61.9824. ELIGIBLE LOANS. (a) The board may provide

1 repayment assistance for the repayment of any student loan for
2 education at any public or private institution of higher education,
3 including a loan for undergraduate education, received by an
4 eligible person through any lender.

5 (b) The board may not provide repayment assistance for a
6 student loan that is in default at the time of the nurse's
7 application.

8 Sec. 61.9825. REPAYMENT. (a) The board shall deliver any
9 repayment under this subchapter in a lump sum:

10 (1) payable to both the lender or other holder of the
11 loan and the nurse; or

12 (2) directly to the lender or other holder of the loan
13 on the nurse's behalf.

14 (b) A repayment under this subchapter may be applied to any
15 amount due in connection with the loan.

16 Sec. 61.9826. REALLOCATION OF MONEY. (a) In each state
17 fiscal year, the board shall reallocate for loan repayment
18 assistance under this subchapter for a particular year any money in
19 the physician education loan repayment program account established
20 under Section 61.5391 that exceeds the amount necessary in that
21 fiscal year for purposes of repayment assistance under Subchapter
22 J.

23 (b) Each year money reallocated under this section may be
24 used to fund loan repayment assistance for not more than 50 eligible
25 applicants.

26 (c) Any money reallocated under Subsection (a) in a fiscal
27 year that is not used for loan repayment assistance under this

1 subchapter in that fiscal year is treated as if that unused amount
2 had not been reallocated in that fiscal year.

3 Sec. 61.9827. GIFTS AND GRANTS. The board may solicit and
4 accept gifts and grants from any source for the purposes of this
5 subchapter.

6 Sec. 61.9828. RULES. (a) The board shall adopt rules as
7 necessary to administer this subchapter.

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

11 (1) each institution of higher education and private
12 or independent institution of higher education;

13 (2) any appropriate state agency; and

14 (3) any appropriate professional association.

15 SECTION 4. Section 61.5391(b), Education Code, is amended
16 to read as follows:

17 (b) Money in the account may not be appropriated for any
18 purpose except:

19 (1) to provide loan repayment assistance to eligible
20 physicians under this subchapter; or

21 (2) to provide loan repayment assistance under
22 Subchapter II if reallocated under Section 61.9826.

23 SECTION 5. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
24 shall adopt the rules for loan repayment assistance under
25 Subchapter II, Chapter 61, Education Code, as added by this Act, not
26 later than December 1, 2013.

27 SECTION 6. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

1 shall adopt a common freshman admission application form for
2 nursing education programs as required by Section 51.762, Education
3 Code, as amended by this Act, not later than September 1, 2014. An
4 institution of higher education must accept freshman applications
5 for nursing education programs using the appropriate common
6 admission application form beginning with applicants for admission
7 for the 2015-2016 academic year.

8 SECTION 7. This Act takes effect September 1, 2013.