

By: West

S.B. No. 358

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to student loan repayment assistance for certain employees of the Department of Family and Protective Services.

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

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

SUBCHAPTER N. REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE FOR CERTAIN DEPARTMENT OF
FAMILY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES EMPLOYEES

Sec. 61.731. REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE AUTHORIZED. The board shall establish a program to provide, using funds appropriated for that purpose and in accordance with this subchapter and rules of the board, assistance in the repayment of student loans for employees of the Department of Family and Protective Services who apply and qualify for the assistance.

Sec. 61.732. ELIGIBILITY. (a) To be eligible to receive repayment assistance, a person must:

(1) apply to the board; and

(2) have been employed for at least one year as, and be currently employed full-time at the Department of Family and Protective Services as:

(A) a child protective services family-based safety services caseworker;

(B) a child protective services investigator;

(C) a child-care licensing investigator or

1 inspector; or

2 (D) a residential child-care licensing
3 investigator or inspector.

4 (b) In awarding repayment assistance to first-time
5 applicants, the board shall give priority to applicants who
6 demonstrate financial need.

7 Sec. 61.733. AMOUNT OF REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE; LIMITATION.

8 (a) For each year that a person meets the eligibility requirements
9 provided by Section 61.732, the person may receive repayment
10 assistance under this subchapter in an amount determined by board
11 rule, not to exceed \$2,500.

12 (b) A person may not receive repayment assistance under this
13 subchapter for more than four years.

14 (c) If the money available for repayment assistance in a
15 period for which assistance is awarded is insufficient to provide
16 assistance to all eligible applicants described by Section
17 61.732(b), the board shall award repayment assistance to eligible
18 applicants by prioritizing awards to applicants employed in regions
19 of this state experiencing the highest turnover.

20 Sec. 61.734. ELIGIBLE LOANS. (a) The board may provide
21 repayment assistance for the repayment of any student loan for
22 education at a public or private institution of higher education,
23 including loans for undergraduate education and graduate
24 education, issued through any lender.

25 (b) The board may not provide repayment assistance for a
26 student loan that is in default at the time of the person's
27 application.

1 Sec. 61.735. REPAYMENT. (a) The board shall deliver any
2 repayment assistance made under this subchapter in a lump sum
3 directly to the lender or other holder of the loan on the person's
4 behalf and in accordance with any applicable federal law.

5 (b) Repayment assistance received under this subchapter may
6 be applied to the principal amount of the loan and to interest that
7 accrues.

8 Sec. 61.736. FUNDING. (a) The repayment assistance
9 program established by this subchapter is funded only from
10 appropriations made specifically to fund the program and from
11 gifts, grants, and donations. The board shall attempt to provide
12 repayment assistance in each state fiscal biennium in amounts
13 sufficient to use all amounts appropriated for the program in that
14 biennium.

15 (b) The board may solicit and accept gifts, grants, and
16 donations from any public or private source for the purposes of this
17 subchapter.

18 Sec. 61.737. RULES. (a) The board shall adopt rules
19 necessary for the administration of this subchapter, including a
20 rule that establishes the amount of repayment assistance awarded to
21 eligible persons each year.

22 (b) The board shall distribute to each institution of higher
23 education, the Department of Family and Protective Services, and
24 appropriate professional associations copies of the rules adopted
25 under this section and pertinent information in this subchapter.

26 SECTION 2. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
27 shall adopt the rules for the repayment assistance program under

S.B. No. 358

1 Subchapter N, Chapter 61, Education Code, as added by this Act, not
2 later than December 1, 2015.

3 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2015.