

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

H.B. 3808
By: Clardy (Menéndez)
Higher Education
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Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Texas has over 200 counties that are designated as mental health professional shortage areas. In an effort to address the state's mental health access and workforce issues, the legislature passed S.B. 239 during the 84th Regular Session, establishing a program at the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), subject to legislative funding, to provide student loan repayment assistance for certain mental health professionals who agreed to practice in underserved areas.

Licensed marriage and family therapists (LMFTs) treat mental and emotional disorders while the licensure requires at least a master's degree, completion of 3,000 clock hours of supervised work, and a passing score on the state licensing exam. H.B. 3808 seeks to provide that licensed marriage and family therapists would benefit from greater access to student loan repayment assistance for therapists looking to obtain a degree.

H.B. 3808 amends the Education Code to make a licensed marriage and family therapist eligible for repayment assistance for certain mental health professional education loans, with the amount of such assistance capped at \$80,000 if the therapist has received a doctoral degree related to marriage and family therapy and \$40,000 if they have not.

H.B. 3808 amends current law relating to student loan repayment assistance for certain mental health professionals.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 61.601, Education Code, to redefine "mental health professional."

SECTION 2. Amends Section 61.607(b), Education Code, as follows:

(b) Prohibits the total amount of repayment assistance received by a mental health professional under this subchapter (Repayment of Certain Mental Health Professional Education Loans) from exceeding:

(1) makes no change this subdivision;

(2) \$80,000, for assistance received by:

(A) makes no change to this paragraph;

(B) and (C) makes nonsubstantive changes; or

(D) a licensed marriage and family therapist, if the marriage and family therapist has received a doctoral degree related to marriage and family therapy;

(3) makes no change to this subdivision; and

(4) \$40,000, for assistance received by a licensed clinical social worker, a licensed marriage and family therapist, or a licensed professional counselor who is not described by Subdivision (2).

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2017.