

By: Powell

S.B. No. 146

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to student loan repayment assistance for certain nurses employed by a long-term care facility.

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 OF EDUCATION LOANS FOR CERTAIN NURSES

Sec. 61.731. LOAN REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE AUTHORIZED. The board shall provide, in accordance with this subchapter and board rules, assistance in the repayment of eligible student loans for eligible nurses who apply and qualify for the assistance.

Sec. 61.732. ELIGIBILITY. To be eligible to receive loan repayment assistance under this subchapter, a nurse must:

(1) apply to the board in a manner prescribed by the board;

(2) be an advanced practice registered nurse, registered nurse, or licensed vocational nurse; and

(3) at the time of application for repayment assistance have been employed full-time for at least one year by, and currently be employed full-time by:

(A) a convalescent or nursing facility, as defined by Chapter 242, Health and Safety Code; or

(B) a continuing care facility, as defined by Chapter 246, Health and Safety Code.

1       Sec. 61.733. LIMITATIONS. A nurse may receive loan  
2 repayment assistance under this subchapter for not more than five  
3 years.

4       Sec. 61.734. ELIGIBLE LOANS. (a) The board may provide  
5 loan repayment assistance under this subchapter for the repayment  
6 of any student loan for education at an institution of higher  
7 education, a private or independent institution of higher  
8 education, or a public or private out-of-state institution of  
9 higher education accredited by a recognized accrediting agency,  
10 including loans for undergraduate education, received by an  
11 eligible person through any lender.

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

15       (c) In each state fiscal biennium, the board shall attempt  
16 to allocate all funds appropriated to the board for the purpose of  
17 providing loan repayment assistance under this subchapter.

18       Sec. 61.735. REPAYMENT. (a) The board shall deliver any  
19 repayment under this subchapter in a lump sum payable:

20               (1) to both the lender or other holder of the loan and  
21 the nurse; or

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

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

26       Sec. 61.736. AMOUNT OF REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE. (a) A nurse  
27 may receive loan repayment assistance under this subchapter in an

1 amount determined by the board, not to exceed \$5,000 for each year  
2 the nurse establishes eligibility for the assistance.

3 (b) The total amount of loan repayment assistance provided  
4 under this subchapter may not exceed the sum of:

5 (1) the total amount of gifts and grants accepted by  
6 the board for the repayment assistance;

7 (2) legislative appropriations for the repayment  
8 assistance; and

9 (3) other funds available to the board for the  
10 repayment assistance.

11 (c) The board may adjust in an equitable manner the  
12 distribution amounts that nurses would otherwise receive under  
13 Subsection (a) for a year as necessary to comply with Subsection  
14 (b).

15 (d) The total amount of loan repayment assistance awarded  
16 under this section may not exceed \$6 million in a state fiscal  
17 biennium.

18 Sec. 61.737. RULES; ADMINISTRATION. (a) The board shall  
19 adopt rules necessary to administer this subchapter.

20 (b) The board shall distribute to each institution of higher  
21 education or private or independent institution of higher education  
22 and to any appropriate state agency and professional association  
23 copies of the rules adopted under this section and other pertinent  
24 information relating to this subchapter.

25 (c) The board shall administer the program under this  
26 subchapter in a manner that maximizes any matching funds available  
27 through other sources.

1        (d) A reasonable amount, not to exceed three percent, of any  
2 money appropriated for purposes of this subchapter may be used to  
3 pay the costs of administering this subchapter.

4        Sec. 61.738. SOLICITATION AND ACCEPTANCE OF FUNDS. The  
5 board may solicit and accept gifts and grants from any public or  
6 private source for the purposes of this subchapter.

7        SECTION 2. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board is  
8 required to provide assistance in the repayment of eligible student  
9 loans for eligible nurses as provided by this Act only if the  
10 legislature appropriates money specifically for that purpose. If  
11 the legislature does not appropriate money specifically for that  
12 purpose, the board may, but is not required to, provide assistance  
13 in the repayment of eligible student loans for eligible nurses as  
14 provided by this Act using other appropriations available for that  
15 purpose.

16        SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2021.