

By: Darby

H.B. No. 2026

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the Rural Veterinarian Incentive Program.

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

SECTION 1. Section 56.101(2), Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

(2) "College" means a college of veterinary medicine ~~[located in this state and]~~ accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association Council on Education.

SECTION 2. Section 56.104, Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 56.104. ELIGIBLE VETERINARY STUDENT OR GRADUATE. A ~~[(a) Except as provided by Subsection (b), a]~~ person is eligible to participate in the program only if the person:

(1) is enrolled as a student of a ~~[the]~~ college or applies to participate in the program on or before the fourth anniversary of the date the person graduates from a ~~[the]~~ college;

(2) will receive or has received from a student loan at least 50 percent of the funds for tuition and fees for one or more academic years while enrolled in the college; and

(3) meets any additional qualifications adopted by the committee.

~~[(b) A person enrolled as a student in an accredited college of veterinary medicine located outside of this state may apply under Subsection (a) to participate in the program if the student~~

1 ~~graduated from a high school located in this state or a general~~
2 ~~academic teaching institution located in this state.]~~

3 SECTION 3. Section 56.105(b), Education Code, is amended to
4 read as follows:

5 (b) To participate as a sponsor in the program, the
6 community or political subdivision must enter into an agreement
7 with the eligible participant to provide financial support to the
8 eligible participant in an amount not less than the tuition and fees
9 required for a full academic year for a student enrolled in a ~~the~~
10 college in exchange for the eligible participant's agreement to
11 practice veterinary medicine in the sponsoring community or
12 political subdivision.

13 SECTION 4. Sections 56.106(a) and (b), Education Code, are
14 amended to read as follows:

15 (a) To participate in the program, an eligible participant
16 must enter into an agreement with the Texas Higher Education
17 Coordinating Board ~~[university system]~~ that:

18 (1) requires the participant to practice veterinary
19 medicine in a rural county for one calendar year for each academic
20 year for which the participant receives financial support under the
21 program;

22 (2) specifies the conditions the participant must
23 satisfy to receive financial support under the program;

24 (3) provides that any financial support the
25 participant receives under the program constitutes a loan until the
26 participant satisfies the conditions of the agreement; and

27 (4) requires the participant to sign a promissory note

1 acknowledging the conditional nature of the financial support
2 received under the program and promising to repay the amount of the
3 financial support, any applicable interest, and reasonable
4 collection costs if the participant does not satisfy the conditions
5 of the agreement.

6 (b) The financial support received by an eligible
7 participant under this subchapter must be used to retire student
8 loan debt or to pay tuition and fees to a college [~~the university~~
9 ~~system~~] while the eligible participant is enrolled in the college.

10 SECTION 5. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
11 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
12 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
13 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
14 Act takes effect September 1, 2023.