

By: Kolkhorst, et al.

S.B. No. 25

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to support for nursing-related postsecondary education,
including scholarships to nursing students, loan repayment
assistance to nurses and nursing faculty, and grants to nursing
education programs.

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

SECTION 1. Section 61.651(1), Education Code, is amended to
read as follows:

(1) "Professional nursing student" means a student
enrolled in:

(A) an institution of higher education; or

(B) a nonprofit, tax-exempt, regionally
accredited college or university operating in accordance with a
memorandum of understanding with this state under an executive
order issued by the governor ~~[a private or independent institution
of higher education]~~ in a course of study leading to an initial or
an advanced degree in professional nursing.

SECTION 2. Section 61.655, Education Code, is amended to
read as follows:

Sec. 61.655. PURPOSE; ELIGIBILITY. (a) A scholarship
program~~[, matching fund program]~~ or loan repayment program
established under this subchapter shall be established and
administered in a manner that the board determines best promotes
the health care and educational needs of this state.

1 (b) The board may establish multiple categories of persons
2 to receive scholarships[~~, matching funds,~~] and loan repayments.
3 The board may include faculty from professional nursing programs
4 with master's degrees or doctorates among the categories of persons
5 authorized to receive loan repayments.

6 (c) Each year funds are available, the board shall establish
7 the categories of persons eligible to receive scholarships[~~, matching funds,~~]
8 and loan repayments and the criteria for selecting
9 persons to be assisted under each category. The criteria:

10 (1) must include that the person be enrolled in, or
11 have outstanding student loans for education received at, as
12 applicable to the program:

13 (A) an institution of higher education; or

14 (B) a nonprofit college or university described
15 by Section 61.651(1)(B); and

16 (2) may include:

17 (A) [~~(1)~~] scholastic ability and performance;

18 (B) [~~(2)~~] financial need;

19 (C) [~~(3)~~] the geographical area in which the
20 person is likely to practice;

21 (D) [~~(4)~~] whether the person receives Temporary
22 Assistance for Needy Families [~~Aid to Families with Dependent~~
23 Children] or participates in another public welfare program;

24 (E) [~~(5)~~] employment by a state agency;

25 (F) [~~(6)~~] employment on a nursing school faculty
26 or a person's intention to seek employment on a nursing school
27 faculty;

1 (G) [~~(7)~~] whether the person is practicing in a
2 geographical area, a practice setting, or an area of practice with
3 an acute nursing shortage or is likely to practice in such an area;

4 (H) [~~(8)~~] the type of certificate or academic
5 degree held or pursued; or

6 (I) [~~(9)~~] any additional factors the board
7 considers relevant to promoting the health care and educational
8 needs of the state.

9 SECTION 3. Section 61.656, Education Code, is amended by
10 amending Subsection (d) and adding Subsection (e) to read as
11 follows:

12 (d) The board shall distribute information about the
13 scholarship program[~~, matching fund program,~~] and loan repayment
14 program established under this subchapter to:

15 (1) employers of registered nurses or licensed
16 vocational nurses;

17 (2) associations of employers;

18 (3) schools and educational programs for registered
19 nurses or licensed vocational nurses; and

20 (4) professional associations of registered nurses or
21 licensed vocational nurses.

22 (e) The rules adopted under this section must provide that
23 not more than 10 percent of the total amount of scholarships or
24 repayment assistance awarded under a program established under this
25 subchapter in a year may be awarded to persons enrolled in, or for
26 the repayment of student loans for education received at, as
27 applicable to the program, a nonprofit college or university

1 described by Section 61.651(1)(B).

2 SECTION 4. Section 61.658(b), Education Code, is amended to
3 read as follows:

4 (b) The board may structure the scholarship program[~~the~~
5 ~~matching fund program,~~] and the loan repayment program established
6 under this subchapter to secure funds available under federal
7 matching programs.

8 SECTION 5. Section 61.9822, Education Code, is amended to
9 read as follows:

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

12 (1) apply to the board;

13 (2) at the time of application for repayment
14 assistance have been employed part-time or full-time for at least
15 one year as, and be currently employed part-time or full-time as, a
16 faculty member of a nursing degree program at an institution of
17 higher education or a private or independent institution of higher
18 education; and

19 (3) comply with any additional requirements adopted by
20 board rule.

21 SECTION 6. Sections 61.9823(a) and (b), Education Code, are
22 amended to read as follows:

23 (a) On qualifying for loan repayment assistance under this
24 subchapter, a nurse may receive repayment assistance for each year
25 of part-time or full-time employment as a faculty member of a
26 nursing degree program at an institution of higher education or
27 private or independent institution of higher education, not to

1 exceed five years.

2 (b) The board by rule shall determine the maximum amount of
3 loan repayment assistance received by a nurse under this subchapter
4 [~~may not exceed \$7,000~~] in any one year. The board shall base the
5 amount of loan repayment assistance received by a nurse for
6 part-time employment on the proportion of the number of hours
7 worked by the nurse to the number of hours worked by a full-time
8 nurse.

9 SECTION 7. Sections 63.202(f) and (g), Education Code, are
10 amended to read as follows:

11 (f) Notwithstanding the limitation provided by Subsection
12 (b), grants awarded under Subsection (c) for the state fiscal
13 biennium ending on August 31, 2025 [~~2021~~], and the fiscal biennium
14 ending on August 31, 2027 [~~2023~~], by the Texas Higher Education
15 Coordinating Board shall be awarded to programs preparing students
16 for initial licensure as registered nurses or programs preparing
17 qualified faculty members with a master's or doctoral degree for
18 the program, including programs at two-year institutions of higher
19 education, four-year general academic teaching institutions,
20 health science centers, and independent or private institutions of
21 higher education, or to the nursing resource section established
22 under Section 105.002(b), Health and Safety Code. In awarding
23 grants under this subsection, the coordinating board may:

24 (1) give priority to institutions proposing to address
25 the shortage of registered nurses by promoting innovation in
26 education, recruitment, and retention of nursing students and
27 qualified faculty;

- 1 (2) award grants on a competitive basis;
- 2 (3) consider the availability of matching funds; and
- 3 (4) fund a study by the nursing resource section to
- 4 evaluate the competencies of clinical judgment and behaviors that
- 5 professional nursing students should possess at the time of
- 6 graduation.

7 (g) Subsection (f) and this subsection expire September 1,

8 2027 [~~2023~~].

9 SECTION 8. The following provisions of the Education Code

10 are repealed:

- 11 (1) Sections [61.653](#) and [61.657](#); and
- 12 (2) Section [61.656\(c\)](#).

13 SECTION 9. (a) As soon as practicable after the effective

14 date of this Act, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

15 shall adopt rules necessary to administer the changes in law made by

16 this Act.

17 (b) Section [61.655](#), Education Code, as amended by this Act,

18 applies beginning with scholarships and loan repayment assistance

19 awarded under a program established under Subchapter [L](#), Chapter [61](#),

20 Education Code, for the 2024-2025 academic year. Scholarships and

21 loan repayment assistance awarded under a program established under

22 Subchapter [L](#), Chapter [61](#), Education Code, for an academic year

23 before the 2024-2025 academic year are governed by the law in effect

24 immediately before the effective date of this Act, and the former

25 law is continued in effect for that purpose.

26 (c) The changes in law made by this Act to Subchapter [JJ](#),

27 Chapter [61](#), Education Code, apply beginning with loan repayment

1 assistance awarded under that subchapter for the 2024-2025 academic
2 year. Loan repayment assistance awarded under Subchapter JJ,
3 Chapter 61, Education Code, for an academic year before the
4 2024-2025 academic year is governed by the law in effect
5 immediately before the effective date of this Act, and the former
6 law is continued in effect for that purpose.

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