

1-1 By: Kolkhorst, et al. S.B. No. 25  
1-2 (In the Senate - Filed March 10, 2023; March 13, 2023, read  
1-3 first time and referred to Committee on Health & Human Services;  
1-4 March 27, 2023, reported favorably by the following vote: Yeas 9,  
1-5 Nays 0; March 27, 2023, sent to printer.)

1-6 COMMITTEE VOTE

	Yea	Nay	Absent	PNV
1-7				
1-8	X			
1-9	X			
1-10	X			
1-11	X			
1-12	X			
1-13	X			
1-14	X			
1-15	X			
1-16	X			

1-17 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
1-18 AN ACT

1-19 relating to support for nursing-related postsecondary education,  
1-20 including scholarships to nursing students, loan repayment  
1-21 assistance to nurses and nursing faculty, and grants to nursing  
1-22 education programs.

1-23 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

1-24 SECTION 1. Section 61.655, Education Code, is amended to  
1-25 read as follows:

1-26 Sec. 61.655. PURPOSE; ELIGIBILITY. (a) A scholarship  
1-27 program[~~, matching fund program,~~] or loan repayment program  
1-28 established under this subchapter shall be established and  
1-29 administered in a manner that the board determines best promotes  
1-30 the health care and educational needs of this state.

1-31 (b) The board may establish multiple categories of persons  
1-32 to receive scholarships[~~, matching funds,~~] and loan repayments.  
1-33 The board may include faculty from professional nursing programs  
1-34 with master's degrees or doctorates among the categories of persons  
1-35 authorized to receive loan repayments.

1-36 (c) Each year funds are available, the board shall establish  
1-37 the categories of persons eligible to receive scholarships[~~, matching funds,~~]  
1-38 and loan repayments and the criteria for selecting  
1-39 persons to be assisted under each category. The criteria may  
1-40 include:

1-41 (1) scholastic ability and performance;

1-42 (2) financial need;

1-43 (3) the geographical area in which the person is  
1-44 likely to practice;

1-45 (4) whether the person receives Temporary Assistance  
1-46 for Needy Families [~~Aid to Families with Dependent Children~~] or  
1-47 participates in another public welfare program;

1-48 (5) employment by a state agency;

1-49 (6) employment on a nursing school faculty or a  
1-50 person's intention to seek employment on a nursing school faculty;

1-51 (7) whether the person is practicing in a geographical  
1-52 area, a practice setting, or an area of practice with an acute  
1-53 nursing shortage or is likely to practice in such an area;

1-54 (8) the type of certificate or academic degree held or  
1-55 pursued; or

1-56 (9) any additional factors the board considers  
1-57 relevant to promoting the health care and educational needs of the  
1-58 state.

1-59 SECTION 2. Section 61.656(d), Education Code, is amended to  
1-60 read as follows:

1-61 (d) The board shall distribute information about the

2-1 scholarship program[~~matching fund program~~] and loan repayment  
2-2 program established under this subchapter to:

2-3 (1) employers of registered nurses or licensed  
2-4 vocational nurses;

2-5 (2) associations of employers;

2-6 (3) schools and educational programs for registered  
2-7 nurses or licensed vocational nurses; and

2-8 (4) professional associations of registered nurses or  
2-9 licensed vocational nurses.

2-10 SECTION 3. Section 61.658(b), Education Code, is amended to  
2-11 read as follows:

2-12 (b) The board may structure the scholarship program[~~the~~  
2-13 ~~matching fund program~~] and the loan repayment program established  
2-14 under this subchapter to secure funds available under federal  
2-15 matching programs.

2-16 SECTION 4. Section 61.9822, Education Code, is amended to  
2-17 read as follows:

2-18 Sec. 61.9822. ELIGIBILITY. To be eligible to receive loan  
2-19 repayment assistance under this subchapter, a nurse must:

2-20 (1) apply to the board;

2-21 (2) at the time of application for repayment  
2-22 assistance have been employed part-time or full-time for at least  
2-23 one year as, and be currently employed part-time or full-time as, a  
2-24 faculty member of a nursing degree program at an institution of  
2-25 higher education or a private or independent institution of higher  
2-26 education; and

2-27 (3) comply with any additional requirements adopted by  
2-28 board rule.

2-29 SECTION 5. Sections 61.9823(a) and (b), Education Code, are  
2-30 amended to read as follows:

2-31 (a) On qualifying for loan repayment assistance under this  
2-32 subchapter, a nurse may receive repayment assistance for each year  
2-33 of part-time or full-time employment as a faculty member of a  
2-34 nursing degree program at an institution of higher education or  
2-35 private or independent institution of higher education, not to  
2-36 exceed five years.

2-37 (b) The board by rule shall determine the maximum amount of  
2-38 loan repayment assistance received by a nurse under this subchapter  
2-39 [may not exceed \$7,000] in any one year. The board shall base the  
2-40 amount of loan repayment assistance received by a nurse for  
2-41 part-time employment on the proportion of the number of hours  
2-42 worked by the nurse to the number of hours worked by a full-time  
2-43 nurse.

2-44 SECTION 6. Sections 63.202(f) and (g), Education Code, are  
2-45 amended to read as follows:

2-46 (f) Notwithstanding the limitation provided by Subsection  
2-47 (b), grants awarded under Subsection (c) for the state fiscal  
2-48 biennium ending on August 31, 2025 [2021], and the fiscal biennium  
2-49 ending on August 31, 2027 [2023], by the Texas Higher Education  
2-50 Coordinating Board shall be awarded to programs preparing students  
2-51 for initial licensure as registered nurses or programs preparing  
2-52 qualified faculty members with a master's or doctoral degree for  
2-53 the program, including programs at two-year institutions of higher  
2-54 education, four-year general academic teaching institutions,  
2-55 health science centers, and independent or private institutions of  
2-56 higher education, or to the nursing resource section established  
2-57 under Section 105.002(b), Health and Safety Code. In awarding  
2-58 grants under this subsection, the coordinating board may:

2-59 (1) give priority to institutions proposing to address  
2-60 the shortage of registered nurses by promoting innovation in  
2-61 education, recruitment, and retention of nursing students and  
2-62 qualified faculty;

2-63 (2) award grants on a competitive basis;

2-64 (3) consider the availability of matching funds; and

2-65 (4) fund a study by the nursing resource section to  
2-66 evaluate the competencies of clinical judgment and behaviors that  
2-67 professional nursing students should possess at the time of  
2-68 graduation.

2-69 (g) Subsection (f) and this subsection expire September 1,

3-1 2027 [~~2023~~].

3-2 SECTION 7. The following provisions of the Education Code  
3-3 are repealed:

3-4 (1) Sections 61.653 and 61.657; and

3-5 (2) Section 61.656(c).

3-6 SECTION 8. (a) As soon as practicable after the effective  
3-7 date of this Act, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board  
3-8 shall adopt rules necessary to administer the changes in law made by  
3-9 this Act.

3-10 (b) The changes in law made by this Act apply beginning with  
3-11 loan repayment assistance awarded under Subchapter JJ, Chapter 61,  
3-12 Education Code, for the 2024-2025 academic year. Loan repayment  
3-13 assistance awarded under Subchapter JJ, Chapter 61, Education Code,  
3-14 for an academic year before the 2024-2025 academic year is governed  
3-15 by the law in effect immediately before the effective date of this  
3-16 Act, and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

3-17 SECTION 9. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
3-18 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
3-19 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
3-20 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
3-21 Act takes effect September 1, 2023.

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