

By: Blanco

S.B. No. 2545

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to student loan repayment assistance for certain health care workers employed in rural counties.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 61, Education Code, is amended by adding Subchapter L-1 to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER L-1. REPAYMENT OF EDUCATION LOANS FOR RURAL HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Sec. 61.671. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Health care worker" means a person who furnishes health care services in direct patient care situations under a license, certificate, or registration issued by this state or a person providing direct patient care in the course of a training or educational program.

(2) "Rural county" means a county in this state with a population of less than 100,000.

Sec. 61.672. 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 health care workers who apply and qualify for the assistance.

Sec. 61.673. ELIGIBILITY. To be eligible to receive loan repayment assistance under this subchapter, a health care worker may not be receiving loan repayment assistance under another

1 program administered by the board and must:

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

4 (2) at the time of application for repayment
5 assistance be employed full-time as a health care worker in a rural
6 county; and

7 (3) commit to full-time employment as a health care
8 worker in a rural county for not less than two years after the
9 health care worker receives the loan repayment lump sum under
10 Section 61.676.

11 Sec. 61.674. LIMITATIONS. A health care worker may receive
12 loan repayment assistance under this subchapter for not more than
13 four years.

14 Sec. 61.675. ELIGIBLE LOANS. (a) The board may provide loan
15 repayment assistance under this subchapter for the repayment of any
16 student loan for education at an institution of higher education, a
17 private or independent institution of higher education, or a public
18 or private out-of-state institution of higher education accredited
19 by a recognized accrediting agency, including loans for
20 undergraduate education, received by an eligible person through any
21 lender.

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

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

1 Sec. 61.676. REPAYMENT. (a) The board shall deliver any
2 repayment under this subchapter in a lump sum payable:

3 (1) to both the lender or other holder of the loan and
4 the health care worker; or

5 (2) directly to the lender or other holder of the loan
6 on the health care worker's behalf.

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

9 Sec. 61.677. AMOUNT OF REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE. (a) A health
10 care worker may receive loan repayment assistance under this
11 subchapter for each year the health care worker establishes
12 eligibility for the assistance in an amount determined by the
13 board.

14 (b) The board by rule shall determine the maximum amount of
15 loan repayment assistance received by a health care worker under
16 this subchapter in any one year.

17 (c) The total amount of loan repayment assistance provided
18 under this subchapter may not exceed the sum of:

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

21 (2) legislative appropriations for the repayment
22 assistance; and

23 (3) other funds available to the board for the
24 repayment assistance.

25 (d) The board may adjust in an equitable manner the
26 distribution amounts that health care workers would otherwise
27 receive under Subsection (a) for a year as necessary to comply with

1 Subsection (c).

2 Sec. 61.678. RULES; ADMINISTRATION. (a) The board shall
3 adopt rules necessary to administer this subchapter.

4 (b) The board shall distribute to each institution of higher
5 education or private or independent institution of higher education
6 and to any appropriate state agency and professional association
7 copies of the rules adopted under this section and other pertinent
8 information relating to this subchapter.

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

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

15 Sec. 61.679. SOLICITATION AND ACCEPTANCE OF FUNDS. The
16 board may solicit and accept gifts and grants from any public or
17 private source for the purposes of this subchapter.

18 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2023.