

Amend CSSB 2253 (senate committee printing) by adding the following appropriately numbered SECTION to the bill and renumbering subsequent SECTIONS of the bill accordingly:

SECTION _____. Subchapter R, Chapter 21, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 21.912 to read as follows:

Sec. 21.912. CERTIFIED TEACHER STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM. (a) The commissioner shall establish and administer a program to provide student loan repayment assistance to eligible certified classroom teachers.

(b) A classroom teacher is eligible for assistance under this section if the teacher:

(1) holds a standard certificate issued under Section 21.0412(a)(1), (2), or (3);

(2) has been continuously employed in a public school in this state for at least three years; and

(3) has outstanding student loan debt incurred for tuition, fees, or other expenses related to completing a teacher preparation program at an institution of higher education.

(c) A teacher who meets the eligibility requirements under Subsection (b) may receive up to:

(1) \$5,000 per year, for a maximum of five years, in loan repayment assistance;

(2) an additional \$2,500 per year if the teacher is certified in bilingual education, special education, or a subject area identified as experiencing a critical teacher shortage by the agency.

(d) The commissioner may adopt rules as necessary to implement this section, including rules relating to:

(1) prioritization of applicants if funding is limited;

(2) procedures for verifying loan amounts and employment;

(3) coordination with any similar state or federal programs.

(e) The legislature shall appropriate money to the agency for purposes of implementing this section. The commissioner may also solicit and accept gifts, grants, or donations from public and

private entities to fund the program.

(f) The agency shall annually report to the legislature on the outcomes of this program, including the number of participants, certification areas, geographic regions, and retention data.