

Act 145 of the 1989 Regular Session.

Act 145

HB1187

By: Representatives Matthews, Wilkins, Cabe, Walker, Mahony,  
Brown, and Townsend

"AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 6, CHAPTER 81 OF THE ARKANSAS CODE OF 1987 TO CREATE THE FRESHMAN/SOPHOMORE MINORITY PROSPECTIVE TEACHER LOAN PROGRAM FOR GRANTING AWARDS TO BLACK AND OTHER MINORITY ARKANSANS ENTERING COLLEGE WITH THE INTENT OF PURSUING TEACHER CERTIFICATION TO TEACH IN ARKANSAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS; TO DESIGNATE THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO ADMINISTER THE PROGRAM; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code of 1987, Title 6, Chapter 81, is amended by adding a new subchapter to read as follows:

"6-81-801. Purpose. The purpose of this subchapter is to increase the number of black and other minority Arkansans attending college with the intent of pursuing certification to teach in the public schools of Arkansas. The need for the program results from the decrease in the number of black students in teacher certification programs, the decreasing proportions of black high school graduates entering college, and the resulting inadequate opportunities for black public school students to experience black teachers who serve as examples of college-educated black Arkansans. The program will provide loans to students in their first two years of college who are preparing for admission to teacher certification programs.

6-81-802. Authorization. There is hereby established a program to be known as "The Freshman/Sophomore Minority Prospective Teacher Loan Program" to be administered by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education.

6-81-803. Student eligibility for initial awards. The term "minority" when used in this chapter shall refer to Black Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, and Native Americans, which group includes all persons having origins in any of the peoples of North America and who maintain cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition. State and independent institutions of higher education may make initial awards to minority students who meet the following conditions:

(a) Are residents of the State of Arkansas, as defined by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, and citizens of the United States or permanent resident aliens;

(b) Are first-time freshmen who state their intent to enter a teacher certification program and teach in the public schools of Arkansas;

(c) Are students with academic potential based upon a combination of standardized test scores and high school grades; and

(d) Are students who have completed a specified minimum general education core of academic courses in high school.

6-81-804. Student eligibility for loan renewal. State and independent institutions of higher education may renew awards to students who meet the following conditions:

(a) Remain residents of the State of Arkansas, as defined by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, and are citizens of the United States or permanent resident aliens;

(b) Maintain the intent to pursue a teacher certification program and teach in the public schools of Arkansas; and

(c) Earn a (2.5) grade point average on a 4.0 system (or its equivalent) which the institution would normally specify for students who plan to major in a teacher education program.

6-81-805. Loan conditions. A recipient must be enrolled as a full-time student in courses in or preparing for entry to an approved teacher certification program and indicate the intent to teach in the public schools of Arkansas. Upon completion of at least one year at the selecting institutions, a student eligible for continuation of the loan may utilize it upon transfer to any eligible institution. A student may receive the loan for a maximum of four semesters (or its equivalent).

6-81-806. Number and amount of loan. The number of initial loan awards in each year shall not exceed 150. The amount for each student's annual loan shall be \$2,000.00.

6-81-807. Institutional Eligibility. The institution to be attended under the loan program must be a state or independent four-year or two-year institution in Arkansas, and offer the prerequisite courses for entry into teacher certification programs.

6-81-808. Selection process. Participating eligible institutions will select students under rules and regulations adopted by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education so as to encourage additional minority students to enter college and prepare for entry into teacher certification programs and choose the most academically qualified minority students who meet the minimum requirements established for the program. Institutions may establish requirements more restrictive than the minimum requirements established for the program so long as they do not conflict with the program requirements established by law, rule and regulation.

6-81-809. Allocation of loans among institutions. The Arkansas Department of Higher Education shall allocate initial loans among eligible institutions with consideration given to each institution's share of the fall total full-time-equivalent enrollment, utilization of loans in the previous year, and other such factors as the department shall determine.

6-81-810. Cancellation of repayment of loans - Failure to repay. (a) Loan recipients who teach full-time in a public school in Arkansas following teacher certification shall, upon annual certification by an appropriate school official, have forgiven one-fifth (1/5) of the total loan payment, and related interest, for each year employed in such capacity to a maximum of five (5) years, when the total loan and accumulated interest will be forgiven.

(b) Loan recipients who do not teach full-time in a public school in Arkansas upon completing their program of study shall repay, within a maximum of five (5) years, the full remaining balance plus accrued interest according to an interest and repayment schedule developed by the Department of Higher Education.

(c) Loan recipients required to repay as provided in subsection (b) who fail to meet their repayment obligations may have added to their total obligation any costs for collection of the debt and shall have their teaching certification in Arkansas revoked by the State Board of Education.

6-81-811. Administration. The Arkansas Department of Higher Education shall administer the Minority Prospective Teacher Loan Program and shall have the following authority and responsibility with respect to the program:

(a) To adopt rules and regulations for the administration of the program consistent with the provisions of this Act, including, but not restricted to, the termination date for acceptance and applications and procedures for payment of loans to recipients;

(b) To establish and consult as necessary with an advisory committee representing public elementary and secondary schools and the public and private institutions eligible for nomination and attendance under this Act in determining rules and regulations, selecting recipients, and such other

matters as are necessary;

(c) To prepare application forms or such other forms as the Department shall deem necessary to properly administer and carry out the purpose of this Act; and

(d) To designate necessary forms and repayment schedules."

SECTION 2. All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are hereby repealed.

SECTION 3. All provisions of this Act of a general and permanent nature are amendatory to the Arkansas Code of 1987 Annotated and the Arkansas Code Revision Commission shall incorporate the same in the Code.

SECTION 4. Emergency. It is hereby found and determined that this program is necessary to increase the number of black and other minority Arkansans pursuing initial certification for teaching in the public schools of Arkansas. Therefore, an emergency is hereby declared to exist and this Act being necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety shall be in full force and effect from and after July 1, 1989.

APPROVED: February 21, 1989

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