

Act 144 of the 1989 Regular Session.

Act 144

HB1186

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

"AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 6, CHAPTER 81 OF THE ARKANSAS CODE OF 1987, TO CREATE THE MINORITY TEACHER EDUCATION LOAN PROGRAM FOR GRANTING AWARDS TO BLACK AND OTHER MINORITY ARKANSANS PURSUING INITIAL 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. Title 6, Chapter 81 of the Arkansas Code of 1987 is hereby amended by adding a new subchapter to read as follows:

"6-81-901. Purpose. Arkansas has experienced decreasing numbers of black students pursuing certification as public school teachers and decreasing proportions of black high school graduates entering college with the result that inadequate numbers of black Arkansans are completing teacher certification programs and black students in the public schools of Arkansas are not exposed to sufficient numbers of teachers who are examples of college-educated black Arkansans. The purpose of this Act is to provide loans to assist and encourage black and other minority Arkansans to enter and complete programs leading to certification as public school teachers. The program will provide loans to students admitted to and within two years of completing teacher certification programs.

6-81-902. Authorization. There is hereby established a program to be known as "The Minority Teacher Education Loan Program" to be administered by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education.

6-81-903. 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 original peoples of North America and who maintain cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition. The Arkansas Department 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 within two years of completing initial certification as classroom teachers; and

(c) Are admitted to an approved program resulting in teacher certification or plan to transfer to an institution with an approved teacher certification program, have a 2.5 grade point average on a 4.0 system (or its equivalent), and are able to be admitted to the program within the first semester at the new institution.

6-81-904. Student eligibility for loan renewal. The Arkansas Department 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 aliens;

(b) Maintain a 2.5 grade point average on a 4.0 system (or its equivalent); and

(c) Complete at least 24 semester-credit hours (or its equivalent) applicable toward teacher certification during the first academic year of the loan.

6-81-905 Loan conditions. Recipients must indicate an intention to teach in the public schools of Arkansas and be enrolled as full-time students pursuing initial certification. Students may receive the loan for a maximum of four semesters (or its equivalent) and may utilize the loan upon transfer to any eligible institution.

6-81-906. Number and amount of loan. The number of initial loan awards in each year shall not exceed 100. The amount for each student's loan shall be \$3,000 per year.

6-81-907. Institutional eligibility. The institution to be attended under the loan program must be a state or independent four-year institution located in Arkansas, meet federal institutional eligibility requirements, and be approved by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education for the teacher certification program chosen by the student. The institution nominating the student for the loan must be a state or independent two-year or four-year institution located in Arkansas, meet federal institutional eligibility requirements, and offer the prerequisite courses for the teacher certification program chosen by the student.

6-81-908. Selection process. Students must be nominated for the loan by an eligible institution and selected by a process administered by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education. The Arkansas Department of Higher Education shall allocate the numbers of nominations to be submitted among the institutions eligible to make nominations with consideration given to number of teacher education graduates, fall total full-time-equivalent enrollment, utilization of loans in the previous year, and/or such other factors as the Department shall determine.

6-81-909. 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, 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 teachers certification in Arkansas revoked.

6-81-910. Administration The Arkansas Department of Higher Education shall administer the Minority Teacher Education 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 of 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 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 3. All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are hereby repealed.

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
