

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to the law as it existed prior to this session of the General Assembly.

1 State of Arkansas
2 86th General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2007
4

As Engrossed: S3/20/07

A Bill

SENATE BILL 885

5 By: Senators Argue, Baker
6 By: Representative Kenney
7

For An Act To Be Entitled

10 AN ACT TO MODIFY THE STATE TEACHER ASSISTANCE
11 RESOURCE PROGRAM; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.
12

Subtitle

14 TO MODIFY THE STATE TEACHER ASSISTANCE
15 RESOURCE PROGRAM.
16
17

18 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:
19

20 *SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 81, Subchapter 15 is amended*
21 *to read as follows:*

22 *6-81-1501. Title.*

23 This subchapter shall be known and may be cited as the "State Teacher
24 Assistance Resource Program".
25

26 *6-81-1502. Definitions.*

27 For purposes of this subchapter:

28 (1) "Five-year teacher education program" means a program within
29 a regionally accredited institution of higher education in Arkansas that will
30 lead to obtaining a teacher certification and is designed for completion in
31 five (5) years with an award of a master's degree in education;

32 (2) "Four-year teacher education program" means a program within
33 a regionally accredited institution of higher education in Arkansas that will
34 lead to obtaining a teacher certification and is designed for completion in
35 four (4) years with an award of a baccalaureate degree in education;

36 (3)(A) "Master of Arts in Teaching program" means a program



1 within a regionally accredited institution of higher education in Arkansas
 2 that will allow graduate students to teach in a middle school or secondary
 3 school while obtaining licensure.

4 (B) "Master of Arts in Teaching" shall include persons who
 5 are licensed in Arkansas through a program of nontraditional licensure; ~~and~~

6 (4) "Two-year teacher education program" means a program within
 7 a regionally accredited institution of higher education in Arkansas that will
 8 *introduce students to the profession of teaching;*

9 (5) "Freshman" means any first-time full-time student with
 10 acceptance at an approved institution of higher education;

11 (6) "Sophomore" means any full-time student with a minimum of
 12 thirty (30) accumulated semester hours at time of receiving this grant;

13 (7) "Junior" means any full-time student with a minimum of sixty
 14 (60) accumulated semester hours at time of receiving this forgivable loan;
 15 and

16 (8) "Senior" means any full-time student with a minimum of
 17 ninety (90) accumulated semester hours at time of receiving this forgivable
 18 loan.

19
 20 6-81-1503. Creation - Purpose.

21 (a) There is created the State Teacher Assistance Resource Program.

22 (b) While in college, the state teacher assistance resource should be
 23 exposed to a range of extracurricular activities geared toward instilling a
 24 strong motivation not only to remain in teaching but also to provide
 25 leadership for tomorrow's schools.

26
 27 6-81-1504. Administration of and authority of the Department of Higher
 28 Education.

29 (a) The State Teacher Assistance Resource Program shall be
 30 *administered by the Department of Higher Education.*

31 (b) The department shall adopt standards for awarding the grants to
 32 ensure that students in their freshman and sophomore years who are actively
 33 pursuing a degree in teaching will receive the grant.

34 ~~(b)(c)~~ (c) The department shall adopt standards for awarding the
 35 forgivable loans to ensure that students in their ~~sophomore, junior, or~~
 36 junior and senior year who are actively pursuing a degree in teaching, are

1 admitted to a teacher education program, or are enrolled in a Master of Arts
2 in Teaching program with the best potential for success receive a forgivable
3 loan.

4 ~~(e)~~(d) The department shall administer the State Teacher Assistance
5 Resource Program in cooperation with teacher training institutions selected
6 by the department.

7 ~~(d)~~(e) (1) The requirements of this subchapter are contingent on the
8 funding available for the State Teacher Assistance Resource Program.

9 (2) The department may use funds appropriated for the Emergency
10 Secondary Education Loan Program, § 6-81-501 et seq. [repealed], and other
11 available funds to fund the State Teacher Assistance Resource Program.

12 ~~(e)~~(f) The department may determine the necessary procedures for the
13 awarding of forgivable loans should the number of eligible applicants and
14 recipients exceed the funds available, but priority consideration shall be
15 given based on a combination of factors, including, but not limited to:

- 16 (1) Full-time enrollment;
17 (2) Cumulative grade point average;
18 (3) Grade point average in courses required for the major;
19 (4) Subject area of intended teaching licensure;
20 (5) Geographical area in which the applicant or recipient
21 intends to teach;

- 22 (6)(A) Prior loan awards.
23 (B) Prior recipients who remain qualified shall receive
24 priority for future awards;

- 25 (7) Students enrolled in two-year teacher education programs;
26 and

- 27 (8) Students enrolled in Master of Arts in Teaching programs.
28

29 6-81-1505. Eligibility.

30 (a) A student entering his or her freshman or sophomore year and
31 admitted to an approved institution of higher education as determined by the
32 Department of Higher Education shall be eligible to receive a grant under the
33 State Teacher Assistance Resource Program if:

34 (1) The student earns a cumulative grade point average of 2.75
35 or above on a 4.0 scale at an approved high school or higher education
36 institution;

1 (2) The student agrees to pursue a degree within the teaching
2 profession; and

3 (3) The student meets any other continuing eligibility criteria
4 established by the Department of Higher Education.

5 (b) A student entering his or her ~~sophomore~~, junior, or senior year
6 and actively pursuing or admitted to a teacher education program shall be
7 eligible to receive a forgivable loan under the State Teacher Assistance
8 Resource Program if:

9 (1) The recipient earns a cumulative grade point average of 2.75
10 or above on a 4.0 scale at an approved institution;

11 (2) The recipient has completed at least one (1) year of full-
12 time postsecondary course work; and

13 (3) The recipient meets any other continuing eligibility
14 criteria established by the Department of Higher Education.

15
16 6-81-1506. Duration - Amount - Repayment.

17 (a)(1) The State Teacher Assistance Resource Program shall be used to
18 provide:

19 (A) A one-year grant in the amount of one thousand dollars
20 (\$1,000) for a freshman who:

21 (i) Is enrolled in an institution of higher
22 education in the state; and

23 (ii) Who commits to teach in a public school located
24 in a geographical area of the state designated as having a critical shortage
25 of teachers or in a subject matter area designated as having a critical
26 shortage of teachers;

27 (B) A one-year grant in the amount of one thousand five
28 hundred dollars (\$1,500) for a sophomore who:

29 (i) Is actively pursuing a degree in teaching at an
30 institution of higher education in the state; and

31 (ii) Who commits to teach in a public school located
32 in a geographical area of the state designated as having a critical shortage
33 of teachers or in a subject matter area designated as having a critical
34 shortage of teachers;

35 ~~(A)~~(C) A forgivable loan in the amount of three thousand
36 dollars (\$3,000) per year for a sophomore, junior, or senior actively

1 pursuing a degree in teaching, admitted to a teacher education program, or
2 enrolled in a Master of Arts in Teaching program who commits to teach in a
3 public school located in a geographical area of the state designated as
4 having a critical shortage of teachers or in a subject matter area designated
5 as having a critical shortage of teachers;

6 ~~(B)~~(D) A two-year forgivable loan if the recipient is in a
7 four-year teacher education program or a three-year forgivable loan if the
8 recipient is in a five-year teacher education program in the amount of six
9 thousand dollars (\$6,000) per year for a junior or senior admitted to a
10 teacher education program who commits to teach in a public school located in
11 a geographical area of the state designated as having a critical shortage of
12 teachers and in a subject matter area designated as having a critical
13 shortage of teachers;

14 ~~(C)~~(E) A loan repayment for federal student loans in the
15 amount of three thousand dollars (\$3,000) per year for each year a certified
16 teacher who graduated from a teacher education program after April 2004
17 teaches in a public school located in a geographical area of the state
18 designated as having a critical shortage of teachers; or

19 ~~(D)~~(F) A loan repayment for federal student loans in the
20 amount of six thousand dollars (\$6,000) per year for each year a certified
21 teacher who graduated from a teacher education program after April 2004
22 teaches in a public school located in a geographical area of the state
23 designated as having a critical shortage of teachers and in a subject matter
24 designated as having a critical shortage of *teachers*.

25 (2) The Department of Education shall set the term of the loan
26 with the goal of assisting the recipient to complete the recipient's teacher
27 education program.

28 (3) No person receiving a forgivable loan under subdivision
29 (a)(1)(A) or (B) of this section shall be eligible to receive a loan
30 repayment under subdivision (a)(1)(C) or (D) of this section.

31 (b)(1) A student may receive a State Teacher Assistance Resource
32 Program and Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship or Arkansas Governor's
33 Distinguished Scholarships to the extent the receipt of both awards does not
34 violate the provisions of § 6-80-105.

35 (2) For the purpose of compliance with § 6-80-105, the
36 forgivable loans under this program shall be considered public funds.

1 (3) No student may participate in more than one (1) forgivable
2 loan program supported with state money.

3 (c) Loan recipients shall execute a note made payable to the
4 Department of Higher Education that shall bear interest at the rate to be
5 determined by the department at the time of the award to begin accruing on
6 September 1 after completion of the program or immediately after termination
7 of the forgivable loan, whichever is earlier.

8 (d) The forgivable loan may be terminated if:

9 (1) The recipient withdraws from school;

10 (2) The recipient does not meet the standards set by the
11 department; or

12 (3) For other reasons as designated by the department.

13 (e)(1) Within nine (9) months after completion of the teacher
14 education program, the recipient of a forgivable loan under the State Teacher
15 Assistance Resource Program shall begin to teach in a public school in the
16 state in accordance with the student's initial commitment or shall begin to
17 repay the loan in accordance with the terms of a note executed under
18 subsection (c) of this section.

19 (2) The department shall forgive one (1) year of the loan for
20 each consecutive year the recipient teaches full time in a shortage area in
21 accordance with the terms of the recipient's initial commitment beginning
22 nine (9) months from the date of graduation.

23 (3) The department may grant loan repayment deferrals to
24 students who enrolled in masters or doctoral programs after completion of a
25 four-year or five-year teacher education program or for other just cause as
26 determined by the department.

27 (4) The department may also forgive the loan if it finds that it
28 is impossible for the recipient to teach in an Arkansas public school as
29 required because of the death or permanent disability of the recipient.

30 (f) Loan recipients required to repay loans as provided in subsection
31 (e) of this section who fail to meet their repayment obligations may have
32 added to their total obligation any costs for collection of the debt and
33 shall have their teaching license in Arkansas revoked by the State Board of
34 Education.

35 (g)(1) All funds appropriated to or otherwise received by the State
36 Teacher Assistance Resource Program for forgivable loans, all funds received

1 as repayment of forgivable loans, and all interest earned on these funds
2 shall be placed in a revolving fund.

3 (2) This revolving fund shall be used for forgivable loans
4 granted under the State Teacher Assistance Resource Program.

5 (h)(1) The department, as administrator for the State Teacher
6 Assistance Resource Program, may use up to fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000)
7 annually from the fund balance for costs associated with administration of
8 the State Teacher Assistance Resource Program.

9 (2) These funds are in addition to funds required for collection
10 costs related to loan repayments.

11 (i) Any recipient of an emergency secondary
12 education loan, § 6-81-501 et seq. [repealed], may qualify for a forgivable
13 loan under the State Teacher Assistance Resource Program and shall continue
14 to fulfill any existing obligation under the terms of any loans received
15 under the Emergency Secondary Education Loan Program, § 6-81-501 et seq.
16 [repealed].

17 (j) The department shall promulgate regulations necessary for the
18 implementation of the State Teacher Assistance Resource Program.

19

20 6-81-1507. State Teacher Assistance Resource Commission.

21 (a) There is established a commission to be known as the State Teacher
22 Assistance Resource Commission.

23 (b) The commission shall consist of eleven (11) members as follows:

24 (1) The Lieutenant Governor, or his or her designee;

25 (2) The chair of the State Board of Education, or his or her
26 designee;

27 (3) Three (3) persons appointed by the Governor;

28 (4) Three (3) persons appointed by the President Pro Tempore of
29 the Senate; and

30 (5) Three (3) persons appointed by the Speaker of the House of
31 Representatives.

32 (c) The appointed commission members shall be:

33 (1) Individuals who have demonstrated a commitment to education;
34 and

35 (2) Residents of the State of Arkansas at the time of
36 appointment and throughout their terms.

1 (d) Appointments are for a term of four (4) years.

2 (e)(1) If, for any reason, a vacancy occurs in an appointed position,
3 the vacancy shall be filled by appointment by the official that made the
4 appointment.

5 (2) The new appointee shall serve for the remainder of the
6 unexpired term.

7 (f) The Lieutenant Governor or his or her designee shall serve as
8 chair.

9 (g)(1) The commission shall meet at times and places the chair deems
10 necessary, but no meetings shall be held outside of the State of Arkansas.

11 (2) A majority of the members of the commission shall constitute
12 a quorum for the purpose of transacting business.

13 (3) All action of the commission shall be by a majority vote of
14 the full membership of the commission.

15 (h) The commission shall:

16 (1) Promote the State Teacher Assistance Resource Program and
17 encourage participation by high school students; and

18 (2) Select the recipients of the State Teacher Assistance
19 Resource forgivable loans.

20 (i)(1) The Department of Higher Education shall
21 provide staff and office space to the commission.

22 (2)(A) Members of the commission shall serve without pay.

23 (B) Members of the commission may receive expense
24 reimbursement in accordance with § 25-16-902, to be paid by the department to
25 the extent money is available.

26

27 /s/ Argue

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