

1 State of Arkansas
2 82nd General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 1999

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1767

4
5 By: Representatives Cleveland, Agee, Allison, Angel, Biggs, Bond, Broadway, Carson, Cook, Dees, Files,
6 Gillespie, Gipson, Gullett, Haak, Harris, Hathorn, Hausam, J. Jeffress, G. Jeffress, C. Johnson, Judy,
7 Lancaster, Lendall, Milligan, Milum, Oglesby, Pappas, Prater, Rodgers, Scrimshire, Simon, T. Smith, M.
8 Steele, Taylor, Teague, L. Thomas, W. Walker, Weaver, Wilkins, Willis, Wood, Wilkinson

For An Act To Be Entitled

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11 "AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE ARKANSAS TECHNICAL CAREERS
12 STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM; AND FOR OTHER
13 PURPOSES. "

Subtitle

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16 "THE ARKANSAS TECHNICAL CAREERS STUDENT
17 LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM. "

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

SECTION 1. Creation.

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23 (a) There is hereby established a program to be known as the "Arkansas
24 Technical Careers Student Loan Forgiveness Program" to be administered by the
25 State Board of Workforce Education and Career Opportunities through the
26 Department of Workforce Education.

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28 (b) Establishment of the Arkansas Technical Careers Student Loan
29 Forgiveness Program and implementation of the provisions of this act shall be
30 contingent on the appropriation and funding necessary to allow the State Board
31 of Workforce Education and Career Opportunities to carry out the duties
32 assigned to it in this act.

SECTION 2. Purpose.

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34 Arkansas is experiencing an increasing demand for a workforce qualified
35 in various technical occupations. The purpose of this act is to establish a
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1 loan forgiveness program to assist and encourage people to enter and complete
2 programs qualifying them to fill the demand for employees in various technical
3 fields. The program will provide repayment for students admitted to high
4 demand technical training programs which shall be forgiven if the recipient
5 works in a high demand technical occupation in Arkansas and satisfies other
6 requirements as set out in this act.

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8 SECTION 3. Administration.

9 The State Board of Workforce Education and Career Opportunities through
10 the Department of Workforce Education shall administer the Arkansas Technical
11 Careers Student Loan Forgiveness Program and shall have the following
12 authority with respect to the program:

13 (1) To adopt rules and regulations for the administration of the
14 program consistent with the provisions of this act;

15 (2) To prepare application forms or such other forms as the State
16 Board of Workforce Education and Career Opportunities shall deem necessary to
17 properly administer and carry out the purpose of this subchapter;

18 (3) To establish and consult with an advisory panel that is
19 representative of agencies and entities involved in the economic development
20 of Arkansas, including business and industry;

21 (4) To contract with an experienced third party, the Arkansas
22 Student Loan Authority or another qualified agency for the administration of
23 this loan forgiveness program.

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25 SECTION 4. Institutional eligibility.

26 The institution to be attended under the loan forgiveness program must be
27 approved by the State Board of Workforce Education and Career Opportunities or
28 the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board to offer training in the
29 technical field chosen by the applicant.

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31 SECTION 5. Educational Program Approval and Priorities.

32 (a) The State Board of Workforce Education and Career Opportunities
33 shall consider comments and suggestions from the Department of Higher
34 Education, the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board, the Arkansas
35 Economic Development Commission, the Employment Security Department, the State
36 Chamber of Commerce, and other appropriate entities to annually develop and

1 publish a list of technical education programs that are approved for this
 2 program.

3 (b) The State Board of Workforce Education and Career Opportunities may
 4 consider the state, regional, and local area priorities when determining the
 5 technical programs that are approved; however, for the 1999-2000 fiscal year,
 6 only state priorities shall be considered.

7 (c) Beginning in the 2000-2001 fiscal year, the State Board of
 8 Workforce Education and Career Opportunities may solicit proposals or requests
 9 from the state's postsecondary institutions, chambers of commerce, business
 10 and industry, and other appropriate local entities for regional and local
 11 priorities when determining the approved technical programs for this program.

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 13 SECTION 6. Student eligibility - Initial Certification of Eligibility.

14 (a) The State Board of Workforce Education and Career Opportunities
 15 shall certify eligibility for people who meet the following conditions:

16 (1) Are residents of the State of Arkansas and citizens of the
 17 United States or permanent resident aliens;

18 (2) Are admitted to an approved program resulting in a diploma,
 19 certificate or degree in a high demand technical field;

20 (3) Have a grade point average as required in the rules and
 21 regulations for administration of this loan forgiveness program for the
 22 specified technical field; and

23 (4) Indicate an intention to work in Arkansas in the high demand
 24 technical field for which they receive the training.

25 (b) Students must apply for the loan forgiveness program, and be
 26 selected by a process administered by the State Board of Workforce Education
 27 and Career Opportunities.

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 29 SECTION 7. Amount of loan forgiveness.

30 (a) The yearly amount for each student's loan forgiveness shall
 31 not exceed the maximum yearly amount allowed under the Arkansas Academic
 32 Challenge Scholarship program.

33 (b) Eligible students may participate in the loan forgiveness
 34 program for a maximum of four (4) years, or its equivalent, as determined by
 35 rules and regulations.

36 (c) The State Board shall establish through rules and

1 regulations, with input from the Department of Higher Education and other
2 appropriate entities, loan forgiveness amounts for approved technical
3 education programs for students enrolled on a less than full-time basis.

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5 SECTION 8. Repayment of loans - Failure to repay.

6 (a) After graduation from the approved technical program, loan
7 recipients who work for one year on a full-time basis in Arkansas in the high
8 demand technical field for which the educational program prepared them shall
9 upon annual certification by their employer, be forgiven one (1) year of the
10 eligible loan amount or its equivalent for persons who enrolled in an
11 educational program on a less than regular full-time basis. Each succeeding
12 year of loan forgiveness is contingent upon one additional year of certified
13 full-time employment in Arkansas in the technical field.

14 (b) Loan recipients who do not graduate from the program or who do not
15 work full-time in the high demand technical field in the state of Arkansas for
16 which they received training shall repay the loan in accordance with the loan
17 recipient's agreement with the lending authority.

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19 SECTION 9. All provisions of this act of a general and permanent nature
20 are amendatory to the Arkansas Code of 1987 Annotated and the Arkansas Code
21 Revision Commission shall incorporate the same in the Code.

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23 SECTION 10. If any provision of this act or the application thereof to
24 any person or circumstance is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect
25 other provisions or applications of the act which can be given effect without
26 the invalid provision or application, and the this end the provisions of this
27 act are declared to be severable.

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29 SECTION 11. All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this act are
30 hereby repealed.

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32 SECTION 12. EMERGENCY CLAUSE. It is hereby found and determined by the
33 Eighty-second General Assembly that there is a continuing and pressing need
34 for skilled technical workers by business and industry in Arkansas which makes
35 it necessary to establish this Arkansas Technical Careers Student Loan
36 Forgiveness Program to aid persons desiring to enter an educational program

1 that will prepare them for such work. Therefore, an emergency is declared to
2 exist and this act being immediately necessary for the preservation of the
3 public peace, health and safety shall become effective on the date of its
4 approval by the Governor. If the bill is neither approved nor vetoed by the
5 Governor, it shall become effective on the expiration of the period of time
6 during which the Governor may veto the bill. If the bill is vetoed by the
7 Governor and the veto is overridden, it shall become effective on the date the
8 last house overrides the veto.

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