

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 83rd General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2001
4

As Engrossed: S3/12/01

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1939

5 By: Representative C. Johnson
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For An Act To Be Entitled

9 AN ACT TO CREATE THE UNIVERSITY ASSISTED TEACHER
10 RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION GRANT PROGRAM; AND FOR
11 OTHER PURPOSES.
12

Subtitle

13 AN ACT TO CREATE THE UNIVERSITY ASSISTED
14 TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION GRANT
15 PROGRAM.
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19 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:
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21 SECTION 1. (a) There is established the University Assisted Teacher
22 Recruitment and Retention Grant Program within the Department of Higher
23 Education.

24 (b) The purpose of the program shall be to attract qualified teachers
25 to the Delta and those geographical areas of the state where there exists a
26 critical shortage of teachers by making available scholarships to persons
27 working toward a Master of Education degree at an institution of higher
28 learning whose teacher education program is approved by the Arkansas Higher
29 Education Coordinating Board.

30 (c)(1) Any institution of higher education in the State of Arkansas
31 which offers a Master of Education degree may apply to the Department of
32 Higher Education for participation in the program.

33 (2) Under the program, participating institutions shall
34 collaborate with the Department of Education to identify, recruit and place
35 teacher education graduates, from both within the state and out-of-state, in
36 school districts situated within those areas of the state where there exists a

1 critical shortage of teachers, as designated by the Department of Education.

2 (d)(1) The Department of Higher Education shall provide funds to
3 participating institutions of higher learning for the purpose of awarding
4 scholarships to qualified persons pursuing a Master of Education degree at
5 such institutions while rendering service to the state as a licensed teacher
6 in a school district in a geographical area of the state where there exists a
7 critical shortage of teachers, as approved by the State Board of Education.

8 (2) The financial scholarship shall be two thousand dollars
9 (\$2,000) per year.

10 (e) As a condition for approval to participate in the program, the
11 institution of higher education shall agree to classify teachers who relocate
12 within Arkansas from out-of-state in order to participate in the program as
13 residents of the state for tuition purposes.

14 (f)(1) Students awarded financial scholarships under the University
15 Assisted Teacher Recruitment and Retention Grant Program may receive the
16 awards for a maximum of four (4) school years.

17 (2) The maximum number of awards which may be made shall not
18 exceed the length of time required to complete the number of academic hours
19 necessary to obtain a Master of Education degree.

20 (g) Financial scholarships under the program shall not be based upon an
21 applicant's eligibility for financial aid.

22 (h)(1) Persons relocating to a geographical area of the state where
23 there exists a critical shortage of teachers, as designated by the State Board
24 of Education, to participate in the University Assisted Teacher Recruitment
25 and Retention Grant Program shall be eligible for reimbursement from the State
26 Board of Education for all or part of their moving expenses to the critical
27 teacher shortage area.

28 (2) The Department of Higher Education shall promulgate rules and
29 regulations necessary for the administration of the relocation expense
30 reimbursement component of the University Assisted Teacher Recruitment and
31 Retention Grant Program.

32 (i) Subject to the availability of funds, the State Board of Education
33 may provide for professional development and support services as may be
34 necessary for the retention of teachers participating in the program in those
35 geographical areas of the state where there exists a critical shortage of
36 teachers.

1 (j) Any person participating in the program who fails to complete a
2 program of study that will enable that person to obtain a Master of Education
3 degree shall become liable immediately to the State Board of Education for the
4 sum of all awards made to that person under the program, plus interest
5 accruing at the current Stafford Loan rate at the time the person abrogates
6 participation in the program.

7 (k) As a condition for participation in the program, a teacher shall
8 agree to employment as a licensed teacher in a school district located in a
9 geographical area of the state where there exists a critical shortage of
10 teachers, as designated by the State Board of Education, for a period of not
11 less than three (3) years, which shall include those years of service rendered
12 while obtaining the Master of Education degree or Educational Specialist
13 degree.

14 (l)(1)(i) Students receiving an award from the University Assisted
15 Teacher Recruitment and Retention Grant Program shall execute a note made
16 payable to the Department of Higher Education for an amount equal to the award
17 each semester that shall bear interest at the rate of ten percent (10%) per
18 year beginning September 1 after completion of the program, or immediately
19 after termination of the student's participation in the program, whichever is
20 earlier.

21 (ii) Students in the University Assisted Teacher Recruitment
22 and Retention Grant Program who receive reimbursement for moving expenses
23 under subsection (h) of this section shall execute a note made payable to the
24 Department of Education for an amount equal to the reimbursement that shall
25 bear interest at the rate of ten percent (10%) per year.

26 (2) Any person failing to complete a program of study which will
27 enable the person to become a licensed teacher shall begin repaying the note
28 according to the note's terms for the sum of all awards made to that person
29 less the corresponding amount of any awards for which service has been
30 rendered.

31 (3) Any person failing to complete their teaching obligation, as
32 required under subsection (k) of this section, shall begin repaying the notes
33 according to the notes' terms for the sum of all awards made to that person
34 less the corresponding amount of any awards for which service has been
35 rendered, except in the case of a deferral of debt for cause approved by the
36 State Board of Education if there is no employment position immediately

1 available upon a teacher's completion of licensure requirements.

2 (4) After the period of the deferral, the person shall begin or
3 resume teaching duties as required under subsection (k) of this subsection or
4 shall become liable on the note under subsection (l) of this section. If a
5 claim for payment of a note is placed in the hands of an attorney for
6 collection, the obligor shall be liable for an additional amount equal to a
7 reasonable attorney's fee.

8 (5) The obligations made by the recipient of a University
9 Assisted Teacher Recruitment and Retention Grant Program award shall not be
10 voidable by reason of the age of the student at the time of receiving the
11 scholarship.

12 (m) All funds received by the Department of Education from the
13 repayment of scholarship awards and relocation expenses by program
14 participants shall be deposited in the fund that provides funding for the
15 University Assisted Teacher Recruitment and Retention Grant Program.

16 (n) The Department of Higher Education shall promulgate rules and
17 regulations necessary for the proper administration of the University Assisted
18 Teacher Recruitment and Retention Grant Program.

19 (o) The requirements of this act are contingent on the funding
20 available for the University Assisted Teacher Recruitment and Retention Grant
21 Program.

22 (p) The Department of Higher Education is authorized to determine the
23 necessary procedures for the awarding of grants should the number of eligible
24 applicants and recipients exceed the funds available.

25 /s/ C. Johnson

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