

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

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 2549

5 By: Representative L. Smith
6
7

For An Act To Be Entitled

8 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE ARKANSAS CHILD WELFARE
9 STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM; AND FOR OTHER
10 PURPOSES.
11

Subtitle

12 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE ARKANSAS CHILD
13 WELFARE STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS
14 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. Arkansas Code title 6, Chapter 81, is amended to add an
22 additional subchapter to read as follows:

23 SUBCHAPTER 16 – ARKANSAS CHILD WELFARE STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS
24 PROGRAM.

25
26 6-81-1601. Creation.

27 (a) There is created the Arkansas Child Welfare Student Loan
28 Forgiveness Program to be administered by the Department of Education.

29 (b) The program shall provide loan assistance to eligible students for
30 upper-division undergraduate and graduate study.

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32 6-81-1602. Purpose.

33 The primary purpose of the Arkansas Child Welfare Student Loan
34 Forgiveness Program is to:

35 (1) Attract capable and promising students to the child welfare
36 profession;



1 (2) Increase employment and retention of persons who are working
 2 toward or who have received either a baccalaureate degree or a master's
 3 degree in social work, or any human services subject area that qualifies the
 4 person for employment as a family services worker; and

5 (3) Provide opportunities for persons making mid-career
 6 decisions to enter the child welfare profession.

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 8 6-81-1603. Eligibility – Loan forgiveness.

9 (a) To be eligible for a program loan, a candidate shall:

10 (1) Be a full-time student at the upper-division undergraduate
 11 or graduate level in a social work program approved by the Council on Social
 12 Work Education leading to either a baccalaureate degree or a master's degree
 13 in social work or an accredited human services degree program;

14 (2) Have declared an intent to work in child welfare for at
 15 least the number of years for which a forgivable loan is received at the
 16 Division of Children and Family Services or its successor, or with an
 17 eligible leading community-based provider;

18 (3)(A) If applying for an undergraduate forgivable loan, have
 19 maintained a minimum cumulative grade point average of at least a 2.5 on a
 20 4.0 scale for all undergraduate work.

21 (B) Renewal applicants for undergraduate loans shall have
 22 maintained a minimum cumulative grade point average of at least a 2.5 on a
 23 4.0 scale for all undergraduate work and have earned at least twelve (12)
 24 semester credits per term, or the equivalent; and

25 (4)(A) If applying for a graduate forgivable loan, have
 26 maintained an undergraduate cumulative grade point average of at least a 3.0
 27 on a 4.0 scale or have attained a Graduate Record Examination score of at
 28 least one thousand (1,000).

29 (B) Renewal applicants for graduate loans shall have
 30 maintained a minimum cumulative grade point average of at least a 3.0 on a
 31 4.0 scale for all graduate work and have earned at least nine (9) semester
 32 credits per term, or the equivalent.

33 (b) An undergraduate forgivable loan may be awarded for two (2)
 34 undergraduate years, not to exceed four thousand dollars (\$4,000) per year.

35 (c) A graduate forgivable loan may be awarded for two (2) graduate
 36 years, not to exceed eight thousand dollars (\$8,000) per year.

1 (d) In addition to meeting criteria specified in subsection (a) of
 2 this section, a loan recipient at the graduate level shall:

3 (1) Hold a baccalaureate degree from a school or department of
 4 social work at any college or university accredited by the Council on Social
 5 Work Education, or hold a degree in a human services field from an accredited
 6 college or university; and

7 (2) Not have received an undergraduate forgivable loan as
 8 provided for in subsection (b) of this section.

9 (e) The State Board of Education shall adopt rules necessary to
 10 administer the program, including without limitation, the following:

11 (1) A forgivable loan must be repaid within ten (10) years after
 12 completion of a program of studies;

13 (2) Credit for repayment of an undergraduate or graduate
 14 forgivable loan shall be in an amount not to exceed four thousand dollars
 15 (\$4,000) in loan principal plus applicable accrued interest for each full
 16 year of eligible service in the child welfare profession;

17 (3) Any forgivable loan recipient who fails to work at the
 18 Division of Children and Family Services or its successor, or with an
 19 eligible leading community-based provider, is responsible for repaying the
 20 loan plus accrued interest at eight percent (8%) annually;

21 (4)(A) Forgivable loan recipients may receive loan repayment
 22 credit for child welfare service rendered at the division or with an eligible
 23 leading community-based provider at any time during the scheduled repayment
 24 period.

25 (B) However, such repayment credit shall be applicable
 26 only to the current principal and accrued interest balance that remains at
 27 the time the repayment credit is earned.

28 (C) No loan recipient shall be reimbursed for previous
 29 cash payments of principal and interest.

30 (f) This section shall be implemented only as specifically funded.

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