

By the Committee on Education and Senator Pruitt

304-1714-01

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A bill to be entitled
An act relating to student financial
assistance; creating s. 240.4061, F.S.;
creating the Teach Florida Scholarship Loan
Program; providing a purpose; defining eligible
institutions and programs of study; authorizing
summer-term receipt of funds; authorizing
part-time enrollment; specifying summer
institutes to be developed by the Department of
Education; providing eligibility criteria;
providing for repayment of a scholarship loan;
providing a definition; providing renewal and
restoration requirements; setting a limit upon
repayment authority; authorizing the Department
of Education to adopt rules; providing an
effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Section 240.4061, Florida Statutes, is
created to read:

240.4061 Teach Florida Scholarship Loan Program.--
The Teach Florida Scholarship Loan Program is created to be
administered by the Department of Education. The primary
purpose of the program is to attract capable and promising
high school and college students to the teaching profession by
offering scholarship loans and to provide an academically and
culturally enriched program that extends beyond the regular
college program.

(1) To the extent that funds are provided annually by
the Legislature in the General Appropriations Act specifically

1 for the purposes of this section, the Department of Education
2 shall:

3 (a) Provide Teach Florida Program participants a
4 scholarship loan to be used at a state postsecondary
5 educational institution or an independent postsecondary
6 educational institution as defined by s. 240.605 for
7 enrollment in a course of study leading to a degree from a
8 state-certified teacher education program.

9 1. A recipient of a scholarship loan under the Teach
10 Florida Program who enrolls in an eligible program of study at
11 a state university or eligible independent postsecondary
12 institution is eligible for an annual award equal to the
13 amount required to pay the average cost of full-time tuition
14 and fees at a state university, plus an educational allowance.

15 2. A recipient of a scholarship loan who enrolls in an
16 associate-in-arts-degree program at a community college which
17 is transferable to a state-approved teacher education program
18 is eligible for an annual award equal to the amount required
19 to pay the average cost of full-time tuition and fees at a
20 community college, plus an education allowance.

21 3. A student may use an award for summer-term
22 enrollment if funds are available.

23 4. An award recipient who is enrolled less than
24 full-time shall be awarded a prorated amount.

25 5. A student may participate in the program for up to
26 110 percent of the number of college credit hours required for
27 completion of the teacher education program.

28 (b) Conduct the following summer institutes, developed
29 and coordinated by the Department of Education, to enhance the
30 campus program and give insights into the challenges facing
31 these students when they enter the classroom:

1 1. Rising sophomore participants shall participate in
2 a "discovery trip" across Florida, with seminars that focus on
3 multicultural education and diversity.

4 2. Rising junior participants shall participate in a
5 seminar on classroom management and teacher leadership,
6 staffed by outstanding teachers identified by the Department
7 of Education, who shall work with small groups of Teach
8 Florida participants.

9 3. Rising senior participants shall participate in an
10 orientation week designed to give participants an introduction
11 to the school system community and an understanding of the
12 overall operation of a school district. This orientation may
13 include a paid internship provided by the school district
14 following the orientation week.

15 4. The department may compensate school district staff
16 who serve as staff in summer institute programs.

17 (2) To be eligible to receive an award from the Teach
18 Florida Scholarship Loan Program, an applicant must:

19 (a) Meet the general requirements for student
20 eligibility for state financial assistance pursuant to s.
21 240.404, except as otherwise provided in this section.

22 (b) Be enrolled in an associate-in-arts-degree program
23 that is transferable to a state-approved teacher education
24 program or be enrolled in a state-approved teacher education
25 program for a minimum of 6 semester hours or the equivalent
26 per term.

27 (c) If applying as a high school senior:

28 1. Have earned a minimum cumulative grade point
29 average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale in high school courses
30 recommended by the State Board of Community Colleges and
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1 adopted by the Board of Regents as college-preparatory
2 courses.

3 2. Have received at least a score of 970 on the
4 combined verbal and quantitative parts of the recentered
5 Scholastic Assessment Test of the College Entrance Examination
6 Board, or an equivalent score on the American College Testing
7 Program.

8 (c) If applying as a college student, have earned the
9 equivalent of a grade point average of 2.75 on a 4.0 scale for
10 all postsecondary education work attempted.

11 (d) Declare the intent to complete one half year of
12 teaching service in a publicly funded school for each semester
13 or its equivalent for which a scholarship loan is received
14 pursuant to this section.

15 (e) Declare the intent to repay the scholarship loan
16 with teaching service within 7 years after completion of an
17 approved teacher education program. For purposes of this
18 section, the term "publicly funded school" means a school that
19 receives at least 75 percent of its operating costs from
20 governmental agencies, including schools that operate
21 educational programs under contract with a public school
22 district or the Department of Education.

23 (f) To receive a renewal award, a participant must:

24 1. Have earned the equivalent of a grade point average
25 of 2.75 on a 4.0 scale for all postsecondary work attempted.

26 2. Have completed annually, during the terms for which
27 a scholarship loan was received, a minimum of 12 credits per
28 term for full-time assistance or a minimum of 6 credits per
29 term for part-time assistance, or the equivalent.

30 (g) If, at any time during the eligibility period, a
31 student's grades are insufficient to renew the scholarship,

1 the student may restore eligibility by improving the grade
2 point average to the required level. A student is eligible for
3 such a restoration only once.

4 (4) A scholarship loan recipient may receive loan
5 repayment credit for teaching service rendered at any time
6 during the scheduled repayment period. However, such repayment
7 credit applies only to the current principal and accrued
8 interest balance that remains at the time the repayment credit
9 is earned. A scholarship loan recipient shall not be
10 reimbursed for previous cash payments of principal and
11 interest. Any scholarship loan recipient who fails to teach in
12 a Florida publicly funded school as specified in paragraph
13 (3)(e) is responsible for repaying the loan plus accrued
14 interest.

15 (a) A scholarship loan must be repaid within 10 years
16 after completion of a program of studies.

17 (b) The State Board of Education shall adopt rules
18 regarding repayment schedules and applicable interest rates
19 under ss. 240.451 and 240.465.

20 (c) An award recipient who is unable to fulfill the
21 teaching requirement due to his or her death or permanent
22 disability is not required to repay the funds awarded pursuant
23 to this section.

24 (d) Funds repaid according to this section shall be
25 deposited in the State Student Financial Assistance Trust
26 Fund.

27 (5) The Legislature shall annually appropriate an
28 amount sufficient to carry out the provisions of this section
29 which shall include funds for the participation of 5,000
30 students annually. Funds appropriated specifically for the
31 Teach Florida Scholarship Loan Program shall be deposited into

1 the State Student Financial Assistance Trust Fund pursuant to
2 s. 240.40.

3 (6) The Department of Education may adopt rules
4 pursuant to ss. 120.536(1) and 120.54 necessary to administer
5 this section.

6 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2001.

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8 STATEMENT OF SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES CONTAINED IN
9 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR
10 SB 1046

11 The Committee Substitute does not create an entitlement
12 program for a scholarship for all high school graduates with a
13 3.0 grade-point average who intend to teach in Florida public
14 schools.

15 Rather, it creates a competitive scholarship loan program for
16 aspiring teachers. The program provides an award equivalent to
17 tuition and other fees for full-time enrollment in a state
18 community college or university, plus an education allowance.

19 A recipient may qualify as a high school graduate or at any
20 point of college enrollment. Recipients in the junior and
21 senior years must be enrolled in an approved teacher
22 preparation program. Part-time enrollment is authorized.

23 Eligibility requirements for high school graduates are
24 identical to the requirements for Bright Futures Merit
25 Scholarship awards.

26 Qualifications for renewal and restoration of the scholarship
27 loan are the same as for Bright Futures Scholarship awards.

28 The loan may be repaid by teaching in a publicly funded school
29 in Florida for the same number of semesters as the scholarship
30 was earned.
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