

By Senator Saunders

37-1174-03

See HB 991

1 A bill to be entitled

2 An act relating to nurses; amending s. 121.091,

3 F.S.; increasing the period of time during

4 which members of the Florida Retirement System

5 who are employed as registered nurses may

6 participate in the DROP; providing a statement

7 of proper and legitimate state purpose;

8 providing an appropriation to the Department of

9 Health; requiring private match of appropriated

10 funds; providing for grants to hospitals for

11 nurse recruitment and retention; providing for

12 rules; providing eligibility criteria; amending

13 s. 464.009, F.S.; requiring applicants for

14 nursing licensure by endorsement to demonstrate

15 the ability to communicate in the English

16 language; amending s. 1009.66, F.S.; providing

17 that applicant awards under the Nursing Student

18 Loan Forgiveness Program shall be on a

19 first-come, first-served basis; providing an

20 effective date.

21

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

23

24 Section 1. Subsection (13) of section 121.091, Florida

25 Statutes, is amended to read:

26 121.091 Benefits payable under the system.--Benefits

27 may not be paid under this section unless the member has

28 terminated employment as provided in s. 121.021(39)(a) or

29 begun participation in the Deferred Retirement Option Program

30 as provided in subsection (13), and a proper application has

31 been filed in the manner prescribed by the department. The

1 department may cancel an application for retirement benefits
2 when the member or beneficiary fails to timely provide the
3 information and documents required by this chapter and the
4 department's rules. The department shall adopt rules
5 establishing procedures for application for retirement
6 benefits and for the cancellation of such application when the
7 required information or documents are not received.

8 (13) DEFERRED RETIREMENT OPTION PROGRAM.--In general,
9 and subject to the provisions of this section, the Deferred
10 Retirement Option Program, hereinafter referred to as the
11 DROP, is a program under which an eligible member of the
12 Florida Retirement System may elect to participate, deferring
13 receipt of retirement benefits while continuing employment
14 with his or her Florida Retirement System employer. The
15 deferred monthly benefits shall accrue in the System Trust
16 Fund on behalf of the participant, plus interest compounded
17 monthly, for the specified period of the DROP participation,
18 as provided in paragraph (c). Upon termination of employment,
19 the participant shall receive the total DROP benefits and
20 begin to receive the previously determined normal retirement
21 benefits. Participation in the DROP does not guarantee
22 employment for the specified period of DROP.

23 (a) Eligibility of member to participate in the
24 DROP.--All active Florida Retirement System members in a
25 regularly established position, and all active members of
26 either the Teachers' Retirement System established in chapter
27 238 or the State and County Officers' and Employees'
28 Retirement System established in chapter 122 which systems are
29 consolidated within the Florida Retirement System under s.
30 121.011, are eligible to elect participation in the DROP
31 provided that:

1 1. The member is not a renewed member of the Florida
2 Retirement System under s. 121.122, or a member of the State
3 Community College System Optional Retirement Program under s.
4 121.051, the Senior Management Service Optional Annuity
5 Program under s. 121.055, or the optional retirement program
6 for the State University System under s. 121.35.

7 2. Except as provided in subparagraph 6., election to
8 participate is made within 12 months immediately following the
9 date on which the member first reaches normal retirement date,
10 or, for a member who reaches normal retirement date based on
11 service before he or she reaches age 62, or age 55 for Special
12 Risk Class members, election to participate may be deferred to
13 the 12 months immediately following the date the member
14 attains 57, or age 52 for Special Risk Class members. For a
15 member who first reached normal retirement date or the
16 deferred eligibility date described above prior to the
17 effective date of this section, election to participate shall
18 be made within 12 months after the effective date of this
19 section. A member who fails to make an election within such
20 12-month limitation period shall forfeit all rights to
21 participate in the DROP. The member shall advise his or her
22 employer and the division in writing of the date on which the
23 DROP shall begin. Such beginning date may be subsequent to the
24 12-month election period, but must be within the 60-month or,
25 with respect to members who are registered nurses licensed
26 under part I of chapter 464 whose continuing employment in an
27 active status is deemed essential by their employer, the
28 96-month limitation period as provided in subparagraph (b)1.
29 When establishing eligibility of the member to participate in
30 the DROP for the 60-month or, with respect to members who are
31 registered nurses licensed under part I of chapter 464 whose

1 continuing employment in an active status is deemed essential
2 by their employer, the 96-month maximum participation period,
3 the member may elect to include or exclude any optional
4 service credit purchased by the member from the total service
5 used to establish the normal retirement date. A member with
6 dual normal retirement dates shall be eligible to elect to
7 participate in DROP within 12 months after attaining normal
8 retirement date in either class.

9 3. The employer of a member electing to participate in
10 the DROP, or employers if dually employed, shall acknowledge
11 in writing to the division the date the member's participation
12 in the DROP begins and the date the member's employment and
13 DROP participation will terminate.

14 4. Simultaneous employment of a participant by
15 additional Florida Retirement System employers subsequent to
16 the commencement of participation in the DROP shall be
17 permissible provided such employers acknowledge in writing a
18 DROP termination date no later than the participant's existing
19 termination date or the ~~60-month~~ limitation period as provided
20 in subparagraph (b)1.

21 5. A DROP participant may change employers while
22 participating in the DROP, subject to the following:

23 a. A change of employment must take place without a
24 break in service so that the member receives salary for each
25 month of continuous DROP participation. If a member receives
26 no salary during a month, DROP participation shall cease
27 unless the employer verifies a continuation of the employment
28 relationship for such participant pursuant to s.
29 121.021(39)(b).

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1 b. Such participant and new employer shall notify the
2 division on forms required by the division as to the identity
3 of the new employer.

4 c. The new employer shall acknowledge, in writing, the
5 participant's DROP termination date, which may be extended but
6 not beyond the original 60-month or, with respect to members
7 who are registered nurses licensed under part I of chapter 464
8 whose continuing employment in an active status is deemed
9 essential by their employer, the 96-month period provided in
10 subparagraph (b)1., shall acknowledge liability for any
11 additional retirement contributions and interest required if
12 the participant fails to timely terminate employment, and
13 shall be subject to the adjustment required in
14 sub-subparagraph (c)5.d.

15 6. Effective July 1, 2001, for instructional personnel
16 as defined in s. 1012.01(2), election to participate in the
17 DROP shall be made at any time following the date on which the
18 member first reaches normal retirement date. The member shall
19 advise his or her employer and the division in writing of the
20 date on which the Deferred Retirement Option Program shall
21 begin. When establishing eligibility of the member to
22 participate in the DROP for the 60-month or, with respect to
23 members who are registered nurses licensed under part I of
24 chapter 464 whose continuing employment in an active status is
25 deemed essential by their employer, the 96-month maximum
26 participation period, as provided in subparagraph (b)1., the
27 member may elect to include or exclude any optional service
28 credit purchased by the member from the total service used to
29 establish the normal retirement date. A member with dual
30 normal retirement dates shall be eligible to elect to
31 participate in either class.

1 (b) Participation in the DROP.--
2 1. An eligible member may elect to participate in the
3 DROP for a period not to exceed a maximum of 60 calendar
4 months or, with respect to members who are registered nurses
5 licensed under part I of chapter 464 whose continuing
6 employment in an active status is deemed essential by their
7 employer, 96 calendar months immediately following the date on
8 which the member first reaches his or her normal retirement
9 date or the date to which he or she is eligible to defer his
10 or her election to participate as provided in subparagraph
11 (a)2. However, a member who has reached normal retirement date
12 prior to the effective date of the DROP shall be eligible to
13 participate in the DROP for a period of time not to exceed 60
14 calendar months or, with respect to members who are registered
15 nurses licensed under part I of chapter 464 whose continuing
16 employment in an active status is deemed essential by their
17 employer, 96 calendar months immediately following the
18 effective date of the DROP, except a member of the Special
19 Risk Class who has reached normal retirement date prior to the
20 effective date of the DROP and whose total accrued value
21 exceeds 75 percent of average final compensation as of his or
22 her effective date of retirement shall be eligible to
23 participate in the DROP for no more than 36 calendar months
24 immediately following the effective date of the DROP.
25 2. Upon deciding to participate in the DROP, the
26 member shall submit, on forms required by the division:
27 a. A written election to participate in the DROP;
28 b. Selection of the DROP participation and termination
29 dates, which satisfy the limitations stated in paragraph (a)
30 and subparagraph 1. Such termination date shall be in a
31 binding letter of resignation with the employer, establishing

1 a deferred termination date. The member may change the
2 termination date within the limitations of subparagraph 1.,
3 but only with the written approval of his or her employer;
4 c. A properly completed DROP application for service
5 retirement as provided in this section; and
6 d. Any other information required by the division.
7 3. The DROP participant shall be a retiree under the
8 Florida Retirement System for all purposes, except for
9 paragraph (5)(f) and subsection (9) and ss. 112.3173, 112.363,
10 121.053, and 121.122. However, participation in the DROP does
11 not alter the participant's employment status and such
12 employee shall not be deemed retired from employment until his
13 or her deferred resignation is effective and termination
14 occurs as provided in s. 121.021(39).
15 4. Elected officers shall be eligible to participate
16 in the DROP subject to the following:
17 a. An elected officer who reaches normal retirement
18 date during a term of office may defer the election to
19 participate in the DROP until the next succeeding term in that
20 office. Such elected officer who exercises this option may
21 participate in the DROP for up to 60 calendar months or a
22 period of no longer than such succeeding term of office,
23 whichever is less.
24 b. An elected or a nonelected participant may run for
25 a term of office while participating in DROP and, if elected,
26 extend the DROP termination date accordingly, except, however,
27 if such additional term of office exceeds the 60-month or,
28 with respect to members who are registered nurses licensed
29 under part I of chapter 464 whose continuing employment in an
30 active status is deemed essential by their employer, the
31 96-month limitation established in subparagraph 1., and the

1 officer does not resign from office within such ~~60-month~~
2 limitation, the retirement and the participant's DROP shall be
3 null and void as provided in sub-subparagraph (c)5.d.

4 c. An elected officer who is dually employed and
5 elects to participate in DROP shall be required to satisfy the
6 definition of termination within the ~~60-month~~ limitation
7 period as provided in subparagraph 1. for the nonelected
8 position and may continue employment as an elected officer as
9 provided in s. 121.053. The elected officer will be enrolled
10 as a renewed member in the Elected Officers' Class or the
11 Regular Class, as provided in ss. 121.053 and 121.22, on the
12 first day of the month after termination of employment in the
13 nonelected position and termination of DROP. Distribution of
14 the DROP benefits shall be made as provided in paragraph (c).

15 (c) Benefits payable under the DROP.--

16 1. Effective with the date of DROP participation, the
17 member's initial normal monthly benefit, including creditable
18 service, optional form of payment, and average final
19 compensation, and the effective date of retirement shall be
20 fixed. The beneficiary established under the Florida
21 Retirement System shall be the beneficiary eligible to receive
22 any DROP benefits payable if the DROP participant dies prior
23 to the completion of the period of DROP participation. In the
24 event a joint annuitant predeceases the member, the member may
25 name a beneficiary to receive accumulated DROP benefits
26 payable. Such retirement benefit, the annual cost of living
27 adjustments provided in s. 121.101, and interest shall accrue
28 monthly in the System Trust Fund. Such interest shall accrue
29 at an effective annual rate of 6.5 percent compounded monthly,
30 on the prior month's accumulated ending balance, up to the
31 month of termination or death.

1 2. Each employee who elects to participate in the DROP
2 shall be allowed to elect to receive a lump-sum payment for
3 accrued annual leave earned in accordance with agency policy
4 upon beginning participation in the DROP. Such accumulated
5 leave payment certified to the division upon commencement of
6 DROP shall be included in the calculation of the member's
7 average final compensation. The employee electing such
8 lump-sum payment upon beginning participation in DROP will not
9 be eligible to receive a second lump-sum payment upon
10 termination, except to the extent the employee has earned
11 additional annual leave which combined with the original
12 payment does not exceed the maximum lump-sum payment allowed
13 by the employing agency's policy or rules. Such early lump-sum
14 payment shall be based on the hourly wage of the employee at
15 the time he or she begins participation in the DROP. If the
16 member elects to wait and receive such lump-sum payment upon
17 termination of DROP and termination of employment with the
18 employer, any accumulated leave payment made at that time
19 cannot be included in the member's retirement benefit, which
20 was determined and fixed by law when the employee elected to
21 participate in the DROP.

22 3. The effective date of DROP participation and the
23 effective date of retirement of a DROP participant shall be
24 the first day of the month selected by the member to begin
25 participation in the DROP, provided such date is properly
26 established, with the written confirmation of the employer,
27 and the approval of the division, on forms required by the
28 division.

29 4. Normal retirement benefits and interest thereon
30 shall continue to accrue in the DROP until the established
31 termination date of the DROP, or until the participant

1 terminates employment or dies prior to such date. Although
2 individual DROP accounts shall not be established, a separate
3 accounting of each participant's accrued benefits under the
4 DROP shall be calculated and provided to participants.

5 5. At the conclusion of the participant's DROP, the
6 division shall distribute the participant's total accumulated
7 DROP benefits, subject to the following provisions:

8 a. The division shall receive verification by the
9 participant's employer or employers that such participant has
10 terminated employment as provided in s. 121.021(39)(b).

11 b. The terminated DROP participant or, if deceased,
12 such participant's named beneficiary, shall elect on forms
13 provided by the division to receive payment of the DROP
14 benefits in accordance with one of the options listed below.
15 For a participant or beneficiary who fails to elect a method
16 of payment within 60 days of termination of the DROP, the
17 division will pay a lump sum as provided in
18 sub-sub-subparagraph (I).

19 (I) Lump sum.--All accrued DROP benefits, plus
20 interest, less withholding taxes remitted to the Internal
21 Revenue Service, shall be paid to the DROP participant or
22 surviving beneficiary.

23 (II) Direct rollover.--All accrued DROP benefits, plus
24 interest, shall be paid from the DROP directly to the
25 custodian of an eligible retirement plan as defined in s.
26 402(c)(8)(B) of the Internal Revenue Code. However, in the
27 case of an eligible rollover distribution to the surviving
28 spouse of a deceased participant, an eligible retirement plan
29 is an individual retirement account or an individual
30 retirement annuity as described in s. 402(c)(9) of the
31 Internal Revenue Code.

1 (III) Partial lump sum.--A portion of the accrued DROP
2 benefits shall be paid to the DROP participant or surviving
3 spouse, less withholding taxes remitted to the Internal
4 Revenue Service, and the remaining DROP benefits shall be
5 transferred directly to the custodian of an eligible
6 retirement plan as defined in s. 402(c)(8)(B) of the Internal
7 Revenue Code. However, in the case of an eligible rollover
8 distribution to the surviving spouse of a deceased
9 participant, an eligible retirement plan is an individual
10 retirement account or an individual retirement annuity as
11 described in s. 402(c)(9) of the Internal Revenue Code. The
12 proportions shall be specified by the DROP participant or
13 surviving beneficiary.

14 c. The form of payment selected by the DROP
15 participant or surviving beneficiary complies with the minimum
16 distribution requirements of the Internal Revenue Code.

17 d. A DROP participant who fails to terminate
18 employment as defined in s. 121.021(39)(b) shall be deemed not
19 to be retired, and the DROP election shall be null and void.
20 Florida Retirement System membership shall be reestablished
21 retroactively to the date of the commencement of the DROP, and
22 each employer with whom the participant continues employment
23 shall be required to pay to the System Trust Fund the
24 difference between the DROP contributions paid in paragraph
25 (i) and the contributions required for the applicable Florida
26 Retirement System class of membership during the period the
27 member participated in the DROP, plus 6.5 percent interest
28 compounded annually.

29 6. The accrued benefits of any DROP participant, and
30 any contributions accumulated under such program, shall not be
31 subject to assignment, execution, attachment, or to any legal

1 process whatsoever, except for qualified domestic relations
2 orders by a court of competent jurisdiction, income deduction
3 orders as provided in s. 61.1301, and federal income tax
4 levies.

5 7. DROP participants shall not be eligible for
6 disability retirement benefits as provided in subsection (4).

7 (d) Death benefits under the DROP.--

8 1. Upon the death of a DROP participant, the named
9 beneficiary shall be entitled to apply for and receive the
10 accrued benefits in the DROP as provided in sub-subparagraph
11 (c)5.b.

12 2. The normal retirement benefit accrued to the DROP
13 during the month of a participant's death shall be the final
14 monthly benefit credited for such DROP participant.

15 3. Eligibility to participate in the DROP terminates
16 upon death of the participant. If the participant dies on or
17 after the effective date of enrollment in the DROP, but prior
18 to the first monthly benefit being credited to the DROP,
19 Florida Retirement System benefits shall be paid in accordance
20 with subparagraph (7)(c)1. or subparagraph 2.

21 4. A DROP participants' survivors shall not be
22 eligible to receive Florida Retirement System death benefits
23 as provided in paragraph (7)(d).

24 (e) Cost-of-living adjustment.--On each July 1, the
25 participants' normal retirement benefit shall be increased as
26 provided in s. 121.101.

27 (f) Retiree health insurance subsidy.--DROP
28 participants are not eligible to apply for the retiree health
29 insurance subsidy payments as provided in s. 112.363 until
30 such participants have terminated employment and participation
31 in the DROP.

1 (g) Renewed membership.--DROP participants shall not
2 be eligible for renewed membership in the Florida Retirement
3 System under ss. 121.053 and 121.122 until termination of
4 employment is effectuated as provided in s. 121.021(39)(b).

5 (h) Employment limitation after DROP
6 participation.--Upon satisfying the definition of termination
7 of employment as provided in s. 121.021(39)(b), DROP
8 participants shall be subject to such reemployment limitations
9 as other retirees. Reemployment restrictions applicable to
10 retirees as provided in subsection (9) shall not apply to DROP
11 participants until their employment and participation in the
12 DROP are terminated.

13 (i) Contributions.--

14 1. All employers paying the salary of a DROP
15 participant filling a regularly established position shall
16 contribute 8.0 percent of such participant's gross
17 compensation for the period of July 1, 2002, through June 30,
18 2003, and 11.56 percent of such compensation thereafter, which
19 shall constitute the entire employer DROP contribution with
20 respect to such participant. Such contributions, payable to
21 the System Trust Fund in the same manner as required in s.
22 121.071, shall be made as appropriate for each pay period and
23 are in addition to contributions required for social security
24 and the Retiree Health Insurance Subsidy Trust Fund. Such
25 employer, social security, and health insurance subsidy
26 contributions are not included in the DROP.

27 2. The employer shall, in addition to subparagraph 1.,
28 also withhold one-half of the entire social security
29 contribution required for the participant. Contributions for
30 social security by each participant and each employer, in the
31 amount required for social security coverage as now or

1 hereafter provided by the federal Social Security Act, shall
2 be in addition to contributions specified in subparagraph 1.

3 3. All employers paying the salary of a DROP
4 participant filling a regularly established position shall
5 contribute the percent of such participant's gross
6 compensation required in s. 121.071(4), which shall constitute
7 the employer's health insurance subsidy contribution with
8 respect to such participant. Such contributions shall be
9 deposited by the administrator in the Retiree Health Insurance
10 Subsidy Trust Fund.

11 (j) Forfeiture of retirement benefits.--Nothing in
12 this section shall be construed to remove DROP participants
13 from the scope of s. 8(d), Art. II of the State Constitution,
14 s. 112.3173, and paragraph (5)(f). DROP participants who
15 commit a specified felony offense while employed will be
16 subject to forfeiture of all retirement benefits, including
17 DROP benefits, pursuant to those provisions of law.

18 (k) Administration of program.--The division shall
19 make such rules as are necessary for the effective and
20 efficient administration of this subsection. The division
21 shall not be required to advise members of the federal tax
22 consequences of an election related to the DROP but may advise
23 members to seek independent advice.

24 Section 2. The Legislature finds that a proper and
25 legitimate state purpose is served when employees and retirees
26 of the state and of its political subdivisions, and the
27 dependents, survivors, and beneficiaries of such employees and
28 retirees, are extended the basic protections afforded by
29 governmental retirement systems that provide fair and adequate
30 benefits and that are managed, administered, and funded in an
31 actuarially sound manner, as required by section 14, Article X

1 of the State Constitution and part VII of chapter 112, Florida
2 Statutes. Therefore, the Legislature hereby determines and
3 declares that the provisions of this act fulfill an important
4 state interest.

5 Section 3. (1) The sum of \$1 million is appropriated
6 from the General Revenue Fund to the Department of Health.
7 Moneys in this appropriation shall be used by that department
8 to make grants to local not-for-profit hospitals for nurse
9 retention and out-of-state recruitment activities during the
10 2003-2004 fiscal year. These moneys are subject to a
11 one-for-one match from sources other than the government of
12 this state or one of its political subdivisions. Moneys not
13 matched by September 30, 2003, revert to the General Revenue
14 Fund.

15 (2) The Department of Health shall accept requests for
16 grants under this act beginning July 1, 2003. The department
17 shall determine grant amounts beginning October 1, 2003, once
18 the amount of the appropriation in subsection (1) which has
19 been matched by additional moneys is determined and the
20 department can determine the amount of grant moneys available.

21 (3) The department shall by rule adopt criteria for
22 grant awards. In addition to other criteria, the department
23 shall require that a hospital have experienced an average
24 vacancy rate among nursing positions during the preceding 12
25 months of 20 percent or more. If the amount available for
26 distribution is less than the aggregate amount of requests
27 that meet the department's criteria, the department shall make
28 grants pro rata.

29 Section 4. Section 464.009, Florida Statutes, is
30 amended to read:

31 464.009 Licensure by endorsement.--

1 (1)(a) The department shall issue the appropriate
2 license by endorsement to practice professional or practical
3 nursing to an applicant who, upon applying to the department
4 and remitting a fee set by the board not to exceed \$100,
5 demonstrates to the board that he or she:

6 1.(a) Holds a valid license to practice professional
7 or practical nursing in another state or territory of the
8 United States, provided that, when the applicant secured his
9 or her original license, the requirements for licensure were
10 substantially equivalent to or more stringent than those
11 existing in Florida at that time;

12 2.(b) Meets the qualifications for licensure in s.
13 464.008 and has successfully completed a state, regional, or
14 national examination which is substantially equivalent to or
15 more stringent than the examination given by the department;
16 or

17 3.(c) Has actively practiced nursing in another state,
18 jurisdiction, or territory of the United States for 2 of the
19 preceding 3 years without having his or her license acted
20 against by the licensing authority of any jurisdiction.

21 Applicants who become licensed pursuant to this subparagraph
22 ~~paragraph~~ must complete within 6 months after licensure a
23 Florida laws and rules course that is approved by the board.
24 Once the department has received the results of the national
25 criminal history check and has determined that the applicant
26 has no criminal history, the appropriate license by
27 endorsement shall be issued to the applicant. This
28 subparagraph ~~paragraph~~ is repealed July 1, 2004, unless
29 reenacted by the Legislature.

30 (b)(2) Such examinations and requirements from other
31 states and territories of the United States shall be presumed

1 to be substantially equivalent to or more stringent than those
2 in this state. Such presumption shall not arise until January
3 1, 1980. However, the board may, by rule, specify states and
4 territories the examinations and requirements of which shall
5 not be presumed to be substantially equivalent to those of
6 this state.

7 (2) In addition to the requirements of subsection (1),
8 the applicant must:

9 (a) Have the ability to communicate in the English
10 language, which may be determined by an examination given by
11 the department.

12 (b)(3) The applicant must Submit to the department a
13 set of fingerprints on a form and under procedures specified
14 by the department, along with a payment in an amount equal to
15 the costs incurred by the Department of Health for the
16 criminal background check of the applicant. The Department of
17 Health shall submit the fingerprints provided by the applicant
18 to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement for a statewide
19 criminal history check, and the Florida Department of Law
20 Enforcement shall forward the fingerprints to the Federal
21 Bureau of Investigation for a national criminal history check
22 of the applicant. The Department of Health shall review the
23 results of the criminal history check, issue a license to an
24 applicant who has met all of the other requirements for
25 licensure and has no criminal history, and shall refer all
26 applicants with criminal histories back to the board for
27 determination as to whether a license should be issued and
28 under what conditions.

29 (3)(4) The department shall not issue a license by
30 endorsement to any applicant who is under investigation in
31 another state, jurisdiction, or territory of the United States

1 for an act which would constitute a violation of this part or
2 chapter 456 until such time as the investigation is complete,
3 at which time the provisions of s. 464.018 shall apply.

4 (4)~~(5)~~ The department shall develop an electronic
5 applicant notification process and provide electronic
6 notification when the application has been received and when
7 background screenings have been completed, and shall issue a
8 license within 30 days after completion of all required data
9 collection and verification. This 30-day period to issue a
10 license shall be tolled if the applicant must appear before
11 the board due to information provided on the application or
12 obtained through screening and data collection and
13 verification procedures.

14 Section 5. Paragraph (a) of subsection (7) of section
15 1009.66, Florida Statutes, as amended by section 3 of chapter
16 2002-400, Laws of Florida, and section 71 of chapter 2002-402,
17 Laws of Florida, is amended to read:

18 1009.66 Nursing Student Loan Forgiveness Program.--

19 (7)(a) Funds contained in the Nursing Student Loan
20 Forgiveness Trust Fund which are to be used for loan
21 forgiveness for those nurses employed by hospitals, birth
22 centers, and nursing homes must be matched on a
23 dollar-for-dollar basis by contributions from the employing
24 institutions, except that this provision shall not apply to
25 state-operated medical and health care facilities, public
26 schools, county health departments, federally sponsored
27 community health centers, teaching hospitals as defined in s.
28 408.07, family practice teaching hospitals as defined in s.
29 395.805, or specialty hospitals for children as used in s.
30 409.9119. An estimate of the annual trust fund dollars shall
31 be made at the beginning of the fiscal year based on historic

1 expenditures from the trust fund. Applicant requests shall be
2 reviewed on a quarterly basis, and applicant awards shall be
3 based on a first-come, first-served basis ~~the following~~
4 ~~priority of employer~~ until all such estimated trust funds are
5 awarded: ~~state-operated medical and health care facilities;~~
6 ~~public schools; county health departments; federally sponsored~~
7 ~~community health centers; teaching hospitals as defined in s.~~
8 ~~408.07; family practice teaching hospitals as defined in s.~~
9 ~~395.805; specialty hospitals for children as used in s.~~
10 ~~409.9119; and other hospitals, birth centers, and nursing~~
11 ~~homes.~~

12 Section 6. This act shall take effect July 1, 2003.

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