

By Senator Campbell

32-200-04

1                                   A bill to be entitled  
 2           An act relating to student loans; creating s.  
 3           43.201, F.S.; providing for a financial  
 4           assistance program administered by the Justice  
 5           Administrative Commission to provide assistance  
 6           to qualified trial court staff attorneys,  
 7           assistant state attorneys, and assistant public  
 8           defenders for the repayment of eligible student  
 9           loans; defining the term "eligible student  
 10          loan"; providing the elements of the program;  
 11          providing for funding; providing an effective  
 12          date.

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

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 16           Section 1. Section 43.201, Florida Statutes, is  
 17 created to read:

18           43.201 Justice Administrative Commission; student loan  
 19 program administration.--

20           (1) The commission shall administer a student loan  
 21 program for career trial court staff attorneys and for career  
 22 assistant state attorneys and assistant public defenders as  
 23 described in chapter 27. The purpose of the program shall be  
 24 to provide financial assistance to trial court staff  
 25 attorneys, assistant state attorneys, and assistant public  
 26 defenders with eligible student loans.

27           (2) As used in this section, the term "eligible  
 28 student loan" means a loan that was issued pursuant to the  
 29 Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, to a trial court  
 30 staff attorney, an assistant state attorney, or an assistant  
 31 public defender to fund his or her law school education.

1           (3) The program shall be administered in the following  
2 manner:

3           (a) A trial court staff attorney, an assistant state  
4 attorney, or a public defender is not eligible for assistance  
5 under the program until the trial court staff attorney,  
6 assistant state attorney, or public defender has been employed  
7 as a trial court staff attorney, an assistant state attorney,  
8 or an assistant public defender for 3 years of continuous  
9 service on his or her employment anniversary date.

10           (b) After an individual has completed 3 years of  
11 continuous service, an affidavit of certification on a form  
12 approved by the commission shall be submitted to the chief  
13 judge's office, the state attorney's office, or the public  
14 defender's office as appropriate. The affidavit of  
15 certification shall, upon approval of the chief judge, the  
16 state attorney, or the public defender, be submitted to the  
17 commission.

18           (c) Upon receipt of the certificate, the commission  
19 may begin yearly payments in the amount of \$3,000 to the  
20 lender that services the eligible student loan. These payments  
21 shall be made for the benefit of the qualified trial court  
22 staff attorney, assistant state attorney, or assistant public  
23 defender named in the certificate and for the purpose of  
24 satisfying the eligible student loan obligation.

25           (d) Upon an individual's completion of 6 years of  
26 continuous service, the loan assistance payment amount shall  
27 increase to \$5,000. After 12 years of continuous service or  
28 upon completion of the payment of the eligible student loan,  
29 whichever occurs first, loan assistance shall cease. The total  
30 amount of loan assistance permitted under the program for any  
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1 one trial court staff attorney, assistant state attorney, or  
2 assistant public defender may not exceed \$44,000.

3 (4) The program shall be funded annually by an  
4 appropriation from the General Revenue Fund to the Justice  
5 Administrative Commission.

6 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2004.

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9 SENATE SUMMARY

10 Provides for a financial assistance program for the  
11 repayment of eligible student loans for career trial  
12 court staff attorneys, assistant state attorneys, and  
13 assistant public defenders.

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