

By Senator Smith

31-01079A-15

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to the STEM Teacher Loan Forgiveness
3 Program; creating s. 1009.641, F.S.; creating the STEM
4 Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program; providing for the
5 administration and funding of the program; providing
6 for student eligibility and the use of funds;
7 providing for rulemaking; providing an effective date.
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9 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
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11 Section 1. Section 1009.641, Florida Statutes, is created
12 to read:

13 1009.641 STEM Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program.—

14 (1) To encourage and incentivize qualified college
15 graduates to remain in the state and teach STEM courses at a
16 public school, there is established the STEM Teacher Loan
17 Forgiveness Program to be administered by the Department of
18 Education.

19 (2) To be eligible, a candidate must:

20 (a) Be a graduate of a Florida public postsecondary
21 education institution that offers 4-year degrees or teacher
22 certifications.

23 (b) Hold a valid Florida educator certificate under s.
24 1012.56.

25 (c) Be employed by a school district and assigned to teach
26 a science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) course
27 at a public school in the state.

28 (3) Only loans to pay the costs of tuition, books, and
29 living expenses shall be covered under the program.

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30 (4) From funds appropriated for the program, the department
31 may make a loan payment of up to \$16,000 on behalf of selected
32 candidates who complete 8 years of consecutive employment as a
33 teacher of STEM courses at a public school in the state. All
34 payments are contingent upon proof of completion of program
35 requirements and shall be made directly to the holder of the
36 loan.

37 (5) The department may recover from funds appropriated for
38 the program the costs of administering the program.

39 (6) The State Board of Education may adopt rules necessary
40 to administer the program.

41 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2015.