

By Senator Ring

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to student loans; creating s. 43.45,
3 F.S.; providing definitions; requiring the Justice
4 Administrative Commission and the Office of the
5 Attorney General to implement a student loan
6 assistance program to assist a career assistant state
7 attorney, assistant public defender, assistant
8 attorney general, or assistant statewide prosecutor in
9 the repayment of eligible student loans; establishing
10 requirements for the administration of the program;
11 requiring the administering body to make payments
12 based on the length of employment of the eligible
13 career attorney and availability of funds; providing
14 funding; requiring the Justice Administrative
15 Commission and the Office of the Attorney General to
16 develop procedures to administer the program;
17 providing an effective date.

18
19 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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21 Section 1. Section 43.45, Florida Statutes, is created to
22 read:

23 43.45 Student loan assistance program; administration.-

24 (1) As used in this section, the term:

25 (a) "Administering body" means:

26 1. The Justice Administrative Commission if the eligible
27 career attorney is employed as an assistant state attorney or
28 assistant public defender.

29 2. The Office of the Attorney General if the eligible

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30 career attorney is employed as an assistant attorney general or
31 assistant statewide prosecutor.

32 (b) "Eligible attorney" means an assistant state attorney,
33 assistant public defender, assistant attorney general, or
34 assistant statewide prosecutor.

35 (c) "Eligible career attorney" means an eligible attorney
36 who has completed at least 3 years, but not more than 12 years,
37 of continuous service as an eligible attorney, regardless of
38 whether the eligible attorney had a break in employment of less
39 than 2 weeks while transferring to another employer of eligible
40 attorneys.

41 (d) "Eligible student loan" means a loan that is not in
42 default and that was issued pursuant to the Higher Education Act
43 of 1965, 20 U.S.C. ss. 1001 et seq., as amended, to an eligible
44 career attorney to fund his or her law school education.

45 (e) "Employment anniversary" means the anniversary of the
46 date that an eligible career attorney commenced employment as an
47 eligible attorney.

48 (2) The administering body shall implement a student loan
49 assistance program for eligible career attorneys. The purpose of
50 the program is to provide financial assistance to eligible
51 career attorneys for the repayment of eligible student loans.

52 (3) The student loan assistance program is administered in
53 the following manner:

54 (a) Within 30 days after the employment anniversary of an
55 eligible career attorney, such attorney must submit to his or
56 her employer a certification affidavit on a form authorized by
57 the administering body, which certifies that the eligible career
58 attorney was an eligible career attorney with one or more

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59 eligible student loans as of his or her last employment
60 anniversary. If the employer signs the certification affidavit,
61 the employer shall submit the affidavit to the administering
62 body within 60 days after the most recent employment anniversary
63 of the eligible career attorney.

64 (b) Upon receipt of a certification affidavit, the
65 administering body shall make a maximum payment of:

66 1. Three thousand dollars if the eligible career attorney
67 has at least 3 years, but not more than 6 years, of continuous
68 service as an eligible career attorney.

69 2. Five thousand dollars if the eligible career attorney
70 has more than 6 years, but not more than 12 years, of continuous
71 service as an eligible career attorney.

72
73 If funds appropriated are insufficient to provide the maximum
74 payment for each eligible career attorney, the administering
75 body shall prorate payments by an equal percentage reduction.

76 (c) A payment under paragraph (b) shall be made by the
77 administering body:

78 1. To the lender of the eligible student loan;

79 2. Between July 1 and July 31 of the next fiscal year
80 following receipt of the certification affidavit by the
81 administering body;

82 3. For the benefit of the eligible career attorney named in
83 the certification affidavit and for the purpose of satisfying
84 his or her eligible student loan obligation; and

85 4. For the eligible student loan that has the highest
86 current interest rate if the eligible career attorney holds more
87 than one eligible student loan.

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88 (d) Payments under paragraph (b) cease upon totaling
89 \$44,000 per eligible career attorney or upon full satisfaction
90 of the eligible student loan, whichever occurs first.

91 (4) The student loan assistance program may be funded
92 annually contingent upon a specific appropriation in the General
93 Appropriations Act for the student loan assistance program.

94 (5) The Justice Administrative Commission and the Office of
95 the Attorney General shall develop procedures to administer this
96 section.

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