

By the Committee on Judiciary; and Senators Ring and Joyner

590-01778-16

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to student loans; creating s.
3 1009.675, F.S.; creating the For the Greater Good
4 Attorney Student Loan Repayment Program to increase
5 employment and retention of attorneys in the public
6 sector; providing eligibility requirements; specifying
7 the loans that will be covered by the repayment
8 program; requiring the Department of Education to make
9 payments to eligible attorneys; providing procedures
10 to administer the program; providing that a payment is
11 not taxable income; providing procedures if
12 appropriated funds are insufficient; authorizing
13 rulemaking; providing an effective date.

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

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17 Section 1. Section 1009.675, Florida Statutes, is created
18 to read:

19 1009.675 For the Greater Good Attorney Student Loan
20 Repayment Program.—

21 (1) There is established within the Department of Education
22 the For the Greater Good Attorney Student Loan Repayment
23 Program. The primary function of the program is to increase
24 employment and retention of attorneys in the public sector by
25 making payments that offset student loans issued or guaranteed
26 by a state or the Federal Government. The department shall
27 administer the program.

28 (2) To be eligible to participate in this program, an
29 attorney:

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30 (a) Must be a member of The Florida Bar;

31 (b) Must be employed full time by a local, state, or
32 federal government;

33 (c) Must be employed in this state;

34 (d) Must have completed not more than 10 years of
35 government service, regardless of whether the attorney had a
36 break in employment of less than 2 weeks while transferring to
37 another governmental entity;

38 (e) Must be earning less than \$65,000 in salary as reported
39 to the Internal Revenue Service;

40 (f) Must not have received any disciplinary action from The
41 Florida Bar;

42 (g) Must have an unsatisfied student loan that was issued
43 or guaranteed by a state or the Federal Government; and

44 (h) Is not eligible for any other state, local, or federal
45 grant or private fund that assists in student loan repayment.

46 (3) Only loans that are not in default and that were issued
47 pursuant to the Higher Education Act of 1965, 20 U.S.C. ss. 1001
48 et seq., as amended, to fund an eligible attorney's law school
49 education shall be covered.

50 (4) From the funds available, the Department of Education
51 shall make an annual payment as follows:

52 (a) Three thousand dollars if the attorney has at least 4
53 years, but not more than 7 years, of continuous government
54 service.

55 (b) Five thousand dollars if the attorney has more than 7
56 years, but not more than 10 years, of continuous government
57 service.

58 (5) Each payment is contingent upon an annual receipt of a

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59 certification affidavit. Within 30 days after the employment
60 anniversary of an eligible attorney, in order to receive a
61 payment under the program, such attorney must submit to his or
62 her employer a certification affidavit on a form authorized by
63 the department which certifies that the attorney was an eligible
64 attorney as of his or her last employment anniversary. If the
65 employer signs the affidavit, the employer shall submit the
66 affidavit to the department within 60 days after the most recent
67 employment anniversary of the eligible attorney, and each year
68 thereafter.

69 (6) Payments are not deemed taxable income. Each payment
70 shall be made directly to the financial institution that
71 services the loan and, if the eligible attorney holds more than
72 one eligible loan, for the loan that has the highest current
73 interest rate.

74 (7) If funds appropriated are insufficient to provide
75 maximum payment for eligible attorneys, the department shall
76 prorate payments for all eligible attorneys by an equal
77 percentage reduction for the year for which funds appropriated
78 are insufficient.

79 (8) The Department of Education may adopt rules necessary
80 to administer this program.

81 (9) The Greater Good Attorney Student Loan Repayment
82 Program may be funded annually contingent upon a specific
83 appropriation in the General Appropriations Act for the Greater
84 Good Attorney Student Loan Repayment Program.

85 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2016.