

By Senator Smith

31-00177-16

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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) The STEM Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program, administered
15 by the Department of Education, is established to encourage and
16 incentivize qualified college graduates to remain in this state
17 to teach STEM courses at a public school.

18 (2) To be eligible, a candidate must meet all of the
19 following criteria:

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 this state for 8 consecutive years.

28 (3) The program may cover only those loans used to pay the
29 costs of tuition, books, and living expenses.

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30 (4) The department may make a loan payment of up to \$16,000
31 on behalf of selected candidates from funds appropriated for the
32 program. All payments are contingent upon proof of completion of
33 program requirements and shall be made directly to the holder of
34 the loan.

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

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

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