1 A bill to be entitled 2 An act relating to the For the Greater Good Attorney 3 Student Loan Repayment Program; creating s. 1009.641, 4 F.S.; creating a student loan repayment program for 5 attorneys employed by local, state, or federal 6 government agencies; limiting eligibility to attorneys 7 employed for less than a specified period and earning 8 less than a specified salary; providing for the 9 administration and funding of the program; providing 10 award amounts for attorneys based on specified eligibility criteria; providing loan payment 11 12 requirements; providing for rulemaking; providing an effective date. 13 14 15 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida: 16 17 Section 1. Section 1009.641, Florida Statutes, is created to read: 18 1009.641 For the Greater Good Attorney Student Loan 19 20 Repayment Program.-21 To encourage top graduating attorneys to seek 22 government employment and to retain top graduating attorneys in

To be eligible, an attorney:

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the public sector, there is established the For the Greater Good

Attorney Student Loan Repayment Program to be administered by

CODING: Words stricken are deletions; words underlined are additions.

the Department of Education.

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(a) Must be a member in good standing of The Florida Bar without disciplinary action against him or her by The Florida Bar.

- (b) Must be a full-time employee of a local, state, or federal government agency.
 - (c) Must be a resident of the state.

- (d) Must be continuously employed by a local, state, or federal government agency for 10 years or less. For purposes of this section, a break in employment of less than 2 weeks while transferring between government agency positions is deemed continuous government service.
- (e) Must earn less than \$65,000 annually, as reported to the United States Internal Revenue Service.
- (f) May not be enrolled in any other loan forgiveness program or receive any other grants or private funds to assist in student loan repayment.
- (3) Only loans that are not in default and issued pursuant to the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, to pay the costs of law school shall be covered under the program.
- (4) A payment to an eligible attorney is contingent upon receipt of a certification affidavit. Within 30 days after the employment anniversary of an eligible attorney, such attorney must submit to his or her employer a certification affidavit in the format prescribed by the department which certifies that the eligible attorney was an eligible attorney as of his or her last employment anniversary. If the employer signs the affidavit, the

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employer shall submit the affidavit to the department within 60 days after the most recent employment anniversary of the eligible attorney.

(5) From the funds appropriated for the program, the department shall make a payment to an eligible attorney:

- (a) If the eligible attorney graduated in the top 5 percent of his or her law school class or scored in the top 5 percent on the Florida bar examination based upon the percentile ranks in effect when the attorney took the examination and:
- 1. Has at least 1 year, but not more than 4 years, of continuous government service, a payment of \$3,000.
- 2. Has at least 5 years, but not more than 7 years, of continuous government service, a payment of \$5,000.
- 3. Has at least 8 years, but not more than 10 years, of continuous government service, a payment of \$8,000.
- (b) If the eligible attorney graduated in the top 15 percent of his or her law school class or scored in the top 15 percent of the Florida bar examination based upon the percentile ranks in effect when the attorney took the examination and:
- 1. Has at least 2 years, but not more than 5 years, of continuous government service, a payment of \$3,000.
- 2. Has at least 6 years, but not more than 8 years, of continuous government service, a payment of \$5,000.
- 3. Has at least 9 years, but not more than 10 years, of continuous government service, a payment of \$8,000.
 - (c) For all other eligible attorneys that:

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79	1. Have at least 4 years, but not more than 7 years, of
30	continuous government service, a payment of \$3,000.
31	2. Have at least 8 years, but not more than 10 years, of
32	continuous government service, a payment of \$5,000.
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34	If the appropriated funds are insufficient to provide the
35	maximum payment for each eligible attorney, the department shall
36	prorate payments by an equal percentage reduction.
37	(6)(a) A payment under this section is not taxable income
38	and shall be made directly to the holder of the loan.
39	(b) If the eligible attorney holds more than one eligible
90	student loan, payment shall be made to the loan that has the

- (7) The State Board of Education shall adopt rules to administer the program.
- Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2016.

highest current interest rate.

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