

By Senator Thurston

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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; requiring the
5 Department of Education to administer the program;
6 providing for the funding of the program; specifying
7 candidate eligibility and the use of program funds;
8 authorizing the department to recover administrative
9 costs of the program; providing for rulemaking;
10 providing an effective date.

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12 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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14 Section 1. Section 1009.641, Florida Statutes, is created
15 to read:

16 1009.641 STEM Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program.-

17 (1) The STEM Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program, administered
18 by the Department of Education, is established to encourage
19 qualified college graduates to remain in this state to teach
20 science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) courses
21 at public schools.

22 (2) To be eligible for the program's incentive, a candidate
23 must meet all of the following criteria:

24 (a) Be a graduate of a Florida public postsecondary
25 education institution that offers 4-year degrees or teacher
26 certifications.

27 (b) Hold a valid Florida educator certificate under s.
28 1012.56.

29 (c) Be employed by a school district in this state and
30 assigned to teach a STEM course at a public school in this
31 state.

32 (3) After an eligible candidate has completed 8 consecutive

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33 years of employment as a teacher of STEM courses at a public
34 school in the state, the department may make a loan payment of
35 up to \$16,000 on behalf of the candidate from funds appropriated
36 for the program. All payments are contingent upon proof of
37 completion of program requirements and shall be made directly to
38 the holder of the loan.

39 (4) The program may cover only those loans used to pay the
40 costs of tuition, books, and living expenses.

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

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

45 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2017.