

By the Committee on Regulated Industries; and Senator Mayfield

580-02028-26

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A bill to be entitled

An act relating to engineering; amending s. 471.033, F.S.; providing penalties for persons found to have repeatedly engaged in the unlicensed practice of engineering; creating s. 471.056, F.S.; establishing the Engineering Student Loan Assistance Program; providing for the program's management by the Florida Engineers Management Corporation; providing the purpose of the program; providing eligibility requirements; providing the source of funding for the program; authorizing the management corporation to make payments; providing requirements for loan principal repayments; requiring the Board of Professional Engineers to adopt rules; providing construction; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Present subsection (4) of section 471.033, Florida Statutes, is redesignated as subsection (5), and a new subsection (4) is added to that section, to read:

471.033 Disciplinary proceedings.—

(4) Notwithstanding subsection (3), a person who violates this section by engaging in the unlicensed practice of engineering, upon a second or subsequent violation, is subject to a fine imposed by the department which increases as follows:

(a) For a second violation, a fine of \$10,000.

(b) For a third violation, a fine of \$15,000.

(c) For a fourth violation, a fine of \$20,000.

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30 (d) For a fifth and any subsequent violation, a fine of
31 \$25,000.

32 Section 2. Section 471.056, Florida Statutes, is created to
33 read:

34 471.056 Engineering Student Loan Assistance Program.—

35 (1) To encourage qualified candidates to seek employment in
36 areas of this state in which critical engineering shortages
37 exist, there is established the Engineering Student Loan
38 Assistance Program. The Florida Engineers Management Corporation
39 established in s. 471.038 shall manage the program. The primary
40 purpose of the program is to increase employment and retention
41 of licensed engineers who work for a state agency or water
42 management district by making payments toward loans received by
43 students from federal or state programs or commercial lending
44 institutions who graduated from accredited or approved
45 engineering programs.

46 (2) To be eligible for the program, a candidate must meet
47 all of the following requirements:

48 (a) Have graduated from an accredited or approved
49 engineering program.

50 (b) Have received a Florida license as a professional
51 engineer or a professional engineer intern.

52 (c) Be currently employed by a state agency or water
53 management district.

54 (3) Program funds are derived from the Professional
55 Regulation Trust Fund.

56 (4) From the funds available, the management corporation
57 may make loan principal repayments of up to \$4,000 a year for up
58 to 4 years on behalf of selected graduates who meet the

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59 requirements of subsection (2), beginning after each selected
60 graduate's first year of employment. All repayments are
61 contingent upon continued proof of employment in a designated
62 state agency or water management district and must be made
63 directly to the holder of the loan. The state bears no
64 responsibility for the collection of any interest charges or
65 other remaining balance.

66 (5) Eligibility is not affected by a change in employment,
67 provided that the participant remains employed by a state agency
68 or a water management district.

69 (6) The board shall adopt rules necessary to administer the
70 program.

71 (7) This section shall be implemented only as specifically
72 funded.

73 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.