

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.