

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 614 Session of
1993

INTRODUCED BY STAIRS, COWELL, YANDRISEVITS, SCHULER, MICOZZIE,
L. I. COHEN, ALLEN, SEMMEL, HALUSKA, TRICH, E. Z. TAYLOR,
NAILOR, MARSICO, PETRARCA, J. TAYLOR, GEIST AND HUGHES,
MARCH 22, 1993

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, MARCH 22, 1993

AN ACT

1 Providing the Early Childhood Education Professional Loan
2 Forgiveness Program for Pennsylvania residents who graduate
3 from institutions of higher education and who apply their
4 educational training to positions in approved child-care
5 facilities in this Commonwealth.

6 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

7 (1) Parents who work need to depend on daily child-care
8 services which provide a safe, healthy and educationally
9 sound program for their children.

10 (2) There is a growing crisis in child care due to an
11 increasing shortage of child-care professionals which is a
12 result of low wages and poor benefits.

13 (3) Child caregiver turnover is currently approximately
14 33% for child day-care centers in this Commonwealth.

15 (4) Child-care teachers earn one-third of the salary of
16 comparably educated public school teachers.

17 (5) Two-thirds of the child-care teachers in this
18 Commonwealth hold four year degrees but make less than the

1 average United States worker who never graduated from high
2 school.

3 (6) Research has shown that young children in group
4 settings thrive emotionally, socially, physically and
5 intellectually when they have an adequate number of adults
6 specifically trained in child development and early childhood
7 education with whom to interact.

8 (7) With current salaries at approximately \$11,200
9 annually for child-care teachers, many of those individuals
10 with the same educational credentials as public school
11 teachers have chosen to abandon careers in child care for
12 teaching jobs which guarantee a minimum annual salary of
13 \$18,500 plus benefits.

14 (8) Payment of a portion of student loans for child-care
15 professionals establishes a commitment by the Commonwealth to
16 encourage individuals trained in child development and early
17 childhood education to apply that training in the growing
18 field of child care.

19 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
20 hereby enacts as follows:

21 Section 1. Short title.

22 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Early
23 Childhood Education Professional Loan Forgiveness Act.

24 Section 2. Definitions.

25 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
26 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
27 context clearly indicates otherwise:

28 "Agency." The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance
29 Agency.

30 "Approved child-care facility." A child day-care center or

1 group day-care home located in this Commonwealth which is
2 subject to and in compliance with regulations issued by the
3 Department of Public Welfare.

4 "Program." The Early Childhood Education Professional Loan
5 Forgiveness Program.

6 "Qualified applicant." A person who meets the following
7 criteria:

8 (1) Has successfully completed an undergraduate program
9 at an accredited college or university with either a
10 bachelor's degree or an associate's degree in the human
11 services field which includes at least 15 credit hours in
12 child development or related areas.

13 (2) Has borrowed through the agency-administered
14 Guaranteed Student Loan Programs.

15 Section 3. Early Childhood Education Professional Loan
16 Forgiveness Program.

17 Qualified applicants who are selected for the program in
18 accordance with this act shall be eligible for payment by the
19 agency of a portion of the debt incurred by the applicant
20 through the agency-administered Guaranteed Student Loan Programs
21 for the education necessary to successfully complete the
22 specified bachelor's degree or associate's degree programs in
23 Pennsylvania. For each calendar year that the applicant is a
24 full-time professional in an approved Commonwealth child-care
25 facility, the agency may forgive a proportional part of the
26 applicant's loan so that the loan may be entirely forgiven over
27 four years of full-time employment in an approved child-care
28 facility. For a graduate with a bachelor's or associate's degree
29 in the specified areas, no more than \$2,500 shall be forgiven in
30 any year, and no more than \$10,000 shall be forgiven for any

1 applicant. Payments shall be made in accordance with the
2 procedures established by the agency.

3 Section 4. Loan forgiveness awards.

4 Recipients of the loan forgiveness awards shall be those
5 child-care professionals who are working in approved child-care
6 facilities in this Commonwealth. Each child-care professional
7 shall be required to submit such documentation of eligibility as
8 the agency may require.

9 Section 5. Funding.

10 Loan forgiveness awards shall be made to the extent that
11 funds are appropriated by the General Assembly. In the event
12 that funding is insufficient to fully fund all eligible
13 applicants, the agency shall make loan forgiveness awards to
14 those applicants who are renewing previous awards and then
15 provide awards to first time applicants as funding permits.

16 Section 6. Interagency responsibilities.

17 It shall be the responsibility of the agency, in cooperation
18 with the Department of Public Welfare, to administer the program
19 established by this act and to promulgate the necessary rules
20 and regulations. It shall be the responsibility of the
21 Department of Public Welfare to screen applicants and furnish a
22 list of all recipients and their pertinent information to the
23 agency. The agency shall make payments to the loan forgiveness
24 award recipients from this list in accordance with the
25 regulations adopted by the agency in cooperation with the
26 Department of Public Welfare.

27 Section 7. Effective date.

28 This act shall take effect January 1, 1994.