

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 884 Session of  
2003

INTRODUCED BY SAYLOR, HERMAN, FLEAGLE, CREIGHTON, McILHATTAN,  
CURRY, GRUCELA, KIRKLAND, SHANER, YUDICHAK, BAKER, BALDWIN,  
BARD, CAPPELLI, CIVERA, COSTA, DALEY, GEIST, GEORGE,  
GILLESPIE, HARHAI, HARPER, HORSEY, JAMES, LAUGHLIN, LEACH,  
LEH, LESCOVITZ, LEVDANSKY, MANDERINO, MELIO, READSHAW, REED,  
SAINATO, SATHER, B. SMITH, TANGRETTI, THOMAS, TURZAI,  
WASHINGTON, WILT AND YOUNGBLOOD, MARCH 13, 2003

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, MARCH 13, 2003

AN ACT

1 Providing Commonwealth support for a Science and Mathematics  
2 Educator Recruitment Loan Forgiveness Program for  
3 Pennsylvania residents who graduate from institutions of  
4 higher education with certification in science and  
5 mathematics and who agree to apply their expertise to public  
6 schools in this Commonwealth.

7 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
8 hereby enacts as follows:

9 Section 1. Short title.

10 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Science and  
11 Mathematics Educator Recruitment Loan Forgiveness Program Act.

12 Section 2. Findings and declaration of intent.

13 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

14 (1) National surveys indicate that having a qualified  
15 teacher in every classroom is the most significant  
16 contributor to student success.

17 (2) In the fastest growing communities in Pennsylvania,

1 rural areas and certain urban centers the most immediate  
2 challenge faced by school entities is finding the quantity of  
3 teachers needed to fill their classrooms.

4 (3) A critical shortage of teachers already exists  
5 nationally in the curricular areas of science and  
6 mathematics.

7 (4) The increasing demand of the highly technical global  
8 marketplace necessitates that our graduating high school  
9 students be proficient in mathematics and science.

10 (5) Forgiveness of a portion of student loans for  
11 certified mathematics and science teachers may encourage new  
12 teachers certified in these critical areas to remain in  
13 Pennsylvania public schools for at least four years and thus  
14 help alleviate any current or projected shortages.

15 (6) The General Assembly should undertake an immediate  
16 study to determine the extent of present and future needs in  
17 the areas of classroom teaching and school administration and  
18 examine possible methods to attract sufficient educational  
19 professionals into our public schools and retain those who  
20 are currently employed.

### 21 Section 3. Definitions.

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

25 "Agency." The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance  
26 Agency.

27 "Eligible school entity." A public school district,  
28 intermediate unit or area vocational-technical school certified  
29 by the Secretary of Education as having a need for teacher loan  
30 forgiveness assistance because of difficulty in attracting

1 qualified mathematics and science teachers.

2 "Program." The Science and Mathematics Educator Recruitment  
3 Loan Forgiveness Program established by this act.

4 "Qualified applicant." A person who meets all of the  
5 following criteria:

6 (1) Is certified by the Department of Education to teach  
7 either mathematics or science.

8 (2) Is in the first year of full-time teaching in either  
9 mathematics or science.

10 (3) Is teaching in an eligible school entity within this  
11 Commonwealth.

12 (4) Has borrowed through and has a current outstanding  
13 balance with the agency-guaranteed Stafford or Consolidation  
14 Loan Programs.

15 (5) Is a resident of this Commonwealth.

16 "Secretary." The Secretary of Education of the Commonwealth.  
17 Section 4. Science and Mathematics Educator Recruitment Loan  
18 Forgiveness Program.

19 (a) Loan forgiveness authorized.--A qualified applicant who  
20 is selected for the program in accordance with this act shall be  
21 eligible for payment by the agency of a portion of the debt  
22 incurred by the applicant through the agency-guaranteed Stafford  
23 or Consolidation Loan Programs for the education necessary to be  
24 certified to teach either mathematics or science in  
25 Pennsylvania. For each consecutive academic year that the  
26 applicant is a full-time teacher in an eligible school entity,  
27 the agency may forgive a proportional part of the applicant's  
28 loan so that the loan may be entirely forgiven over four years  
29 of full-time teaching.

30 (b) Amount of loan forgiveness.--No more than \$3,000 shall

1 be forgiven in any year, and no more than \$12,000 shall be  
2 forgiven for any applicant. Payments shall be made in accordance  
3 with the procedures established by the agency and shall be  
4 referred to as loan forgiveness awards.

5 Section 5. Eligibility for loan forgiveness awards.

6 Recipients of the loan forgiveness awards shall be those  
7 teachers who are certified by the Department of Education in  
8 mathematics or science and who have received a satisfactory  
9 rating by their district of employment for the academic year.  
10 Each applicant shall be required to submit such documentation of  
11 continued eligibility as the agency may require.

12 Section 6. Funding.

13 Loan forgiveness awards may be made to the extent that funds  
14 are appropriated by the General Assembly.

15 Section 7. Responsibility of agency.

16 The agency shall administer the program and shall adopt such  
17 regulations, policies, procedures and forms as are necessary to  
18 carry out the provisions of this act.

19 Section 8. Effective date.

20 This act shall take effect July 1, 2003, or immediately,  
21 whichever is later.