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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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SENATE BILL

No. 398      Session of  
2007

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INTRODUCED BY MUSTO, BOSCOLA, ERICKSON, RAFFERTY, FONTANA,  
STACK, WASHINGTON, STOUT, COSTA, KITCHEN, FERLO, O'PAKE,  
BROWNE, EARLL, KASUNIC, LAVALLE, WOZNIAK, DINNIMAN, HUGHES  
AND RHOADES, MARCH 13, 2007

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REFERRED TO EDUCATION, MARCH 13, 2007

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AN ACT

1 Establishing a program of loan forgiveness for teachers in  
2 foreign language, mathematics and science; and imposing  
3 powers and duties on the Pennsylvania Higher Education  
4 Assistance Agency.

5 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
6 hereby enacts as follows:

7 Section 1. Short title.

8 This act shall be known and may be cited as the High-Need  
9 Teachers Loan Forgiveness Act.

10 Section 2. Declaration of policy.

11 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

12 (1) The number of college students planning to enter the  
13 teaching profession in high-need subject areas is inadequate  
14 to meet the need for teachers in our public schools.

15 (2) In order to establish and maintain its place in an  
16 increasingly global and international economy, this  
17 Commonwealth must educate more workers trained in foreign  
18 language, mathematics and science.

(3) Payment of a portion of student loans for certified teachers serves the important public purpose of encouraging student to pursue degrees in high-need subject areas and to teach high-need subject areas in the public schools of this Commonwealth.

(4) Increasing the number of students and teachers in high-need subject areas will contribute to the economic development of this Commonwealth.

### Section 3. Definitions.

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

"Agency." The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency.

"Department." The Department of Education of the Commonwealth.

"High-need subject area." Any of the following:

(1) Foreign language.

(2) Mathematics.

(3) Science.

"Program." The High-Need Teachers Loan Forgiveness Program established in section 6.

"Qualified applicant." Any of the following:

(1) A qualified foreign language applicant.

(2) A qualified mathematics applicant.

(3) A qualified science applicant.

"Qualified foreign language applicant." An individual who meets all of the following criteria:

(1) Holds a degree from an undergraduate or graduate institution of higher education.

(2) Is certified by the department to teach foreign language.

(3) Executes a sworn affidavit, under penalty of perjury, that the person does not have a delinquent payment owing to any Commonwealth agency.

(4) Is hired for employment subsequent to the effective date of this act to be a full-time permanent teacher in a school district in this Commonwealth.

(5) Applies for the program in the individual's first year of full-time teaching.

"Qualified mathematics applicant." An individual who meets all of the following criteria:

(1) Holds a degree from an undergraduate or graduate institution of higher education.

(2) Is certified by the department to teach mathematics.

(3) Executes a sworn affidavit, under penalty of perjury, that the individual does not have a delinquent payment owing to any Commonwealth agency.

(4) Is hired for employment subsequent to the effective date of this act to be a full-time permanent teacher in a school district in this Commonwealth.

(5) Applies for the program in the individual's first year of full-time teaching.

"Qualified science applicant." An individual who meets all of the following criteria:

(1) Holds a degree from an undergraduate or graduate institution of higher education.

(2) Is certified by the department to teach science.

(3) Executes a sworn affidavit, under penalty of perjury, that the individual does not have a delinquent

1 payment owing to any Commonwealth agency.

2 (4) Is hired for employment subsequent to the effective  
3 date of this act to be a full-time permanent teacher in a  
4 school district in this Commonwealth.

5 (5) Applies for the program in the individual's first  
6 year of full-time teaching.

7 "Renewal applicant." A qualified applicant who has received  
8 an award under the program in the last program year in which  
9 money was appropriated for the program.

10 "Secretary." The Secretary of Education of the Commonwealth.  
11 Section 4. Administration.

12 The agency has the following powers and duties:

13 (1) To administer the program.

14 (2) To promulgate regulations to implement this act.

15 Section 5. Funding.

16 The agency may make Loan forgiveness awards under section 7  
17 to the extent that funds are appropriated by the General  
18 Assembly and are sufficient to cover administration of the  
19 program. Preference shall be given to renewal applicants. If  
20 funding is insufficient to fully fund administration and awards  
21 to all qualified applicants, the agency shall utilize a random  
22 lottery system for determining which applicants receive loan  
23 forgiveness awards.

24 Section 6. Program.

25 (a) Establishment.--The High-Need Teachers Loan Forgiveness  
26 Program is established.

27 (b) Purpose.--The purpose of the program is to provide loan  
28 forgiveness awards under section 7 to qualified applicants.

29 Section 7. Loan forgiveness awards.

30 (a) Eligibility.--

1 (1) A a recipient of a loan forgiveness award must:

2 (i) be a qualified applicant; and

3 (ii) receive a satisfactory rating by the district  
4 for the academic year.

5 (2) A qualified applicant must submit documentation of  
6 eligibility as the agency requires by regulation.

7 (b) Procedure.--

8 (1) If a qualified applicant is a full-time teacher for  
9 five consecutive academic years in the same approved  
10 Commonwealth public school district, the agency may forgive  
11 the qualified applicant's loan of up to \$25,000.

12 (2) The agency shall make loan forgiveness awards as  
13 follows:

14 (i) First academic year of full-time teaching in an  
15 amount up to \$3,000.

16 (ii) Second academic year of full-time teaching in  
17 an amount up to \$4,000.

18 (iii) Third academic year of full-time teaching in  
19 an amount up to \$5,000.

20 (iv) Fourth academic year of full-time teaching in  
21 an amount up to \$6,000.

22 (v) Fifth academic year of full-time teaching in an  
23 amount up to \$7,000.

24 (c) Ineligibility.--A loan forgiveness recipient under the  
25 teacher recruitment assistance program established under Article  
26 XXVI-I of the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as  
27 the Public School Code of 1949, shall not be eligible to receive  
28 loan forgiveness awards under this act concurrently.

29 Section 20. Effective date.

30 This act shall take effect in 60 days.