

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 220 Session of
2007

INTRODUCED BY TANGRETTI, BAKER, BELFANTI, BIANCUCCI, BISHOP,
CALTAGIRONE, CAPPELLI, COSTA, CURRY, DeLUCA, DePASQUALE,
EVERETT, FAIRCHILD, FRANKEL, FREEMAN, GEORGE, GOODMAN,
GRUCELA, HALUSKA, HARHAI, HENNESSEY, HUTCHINSON, JOSEPHS,
KOTIK, MAHONEY, MANN, MARKOSEK, McILHATTAN, M. O'BRIEN,
O'NEILL, PETRARCA, PHILLIPS, PYLE, READSHAW, REED, SAINATO,
SAYLOR, SCAVELLO, SOLOBAY, STABACK, SURRA, WALKO, WHEATLEY,
WILLIAMS, WOJNAROSKI, YOUNGBLOOD AND YUDICHAK,
FEBRUARY 5, 2007

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, FEBRUARY 5, 2007

AN ACT

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

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

8 Section 1. Short title.

9 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Science and
10 Mathematics Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program Act.

11 Section 2. Findings and declaration of intent.

12 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

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

16 (2) A critical shortage of teachers already exists

1 nationally in the curricular areas of science and
2 mathematics.

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

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

11 Section 3. Definitions.

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

15 "Agency." The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance
16 Agency.

17 "Eligible school entity." A public school district,
18 intermediate unit or area vocational-technical school certified
19 by the Secretary of Education as having a need for teacher loan
20 forgiveness assistance because of difficulty in attracting
21 qualified mathematics and science teachers.

22 "Program." The Science and Mathematics Teacher Loan
23 Forgiveness Program established by this act.

24 "Qualified applicant." A person who meets all of the
25 following criteria:

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

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

30 (3) Is teaching in an eligible school entity within this

1 Commonwealth.

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

5 (5) Is a resident of this Commonwealth.

6 (6) Earned a diploma from a Pennsylvania institution of
7 higher education enabling the person to obtain certification
8 to teach in this Commonwealth.

9 "Secretary." The Secretary of Education of the Commonwealth.

10 Section 4. Science and Mathematics Teacher Loan Forgiveness
11 Program.

12 (a) Loan forgiveness authorized.--A qualified applicant who
13 is selected for the program in accordance with this act shall be
14 eligible for payment by the agency of a portion of the debt
15 incurred by the applicant through the agency-guaranteed Stafford
16 or Consolidation Loan Programs for the education necessary to be
17 certified to teach either mathematics or science in
18 Pennsylvania. For each consecutive academic year that the
19 applicant is a full-time teacher in an eligible school entity,
20 the agency may forgive a portion of the applicant's loan in
21 accordance with procedures established by the agency and
22 subsection (b).

23 (b) Amount of loan forgiveness.--Qualified applicants may
24 receive loan forgiveness awards as follows:

25 (1) First academic year of full-time teaching in an
26 amount up to \$1,000.

27 (2) Second academic year of full-time teaching in an
28 amount up to \$2,000.

29 (3) Third academic year of full-time teaching in an
30 amount up to \$4,000.

1 (4) Fourth academic year of full-time teaching in an
2 amount up to \$8,000.

3 Section 5. Eligibility for loan forgiveness awards.

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

10 Section 6. Funding.

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

13 Section 7. Responsibility of agency.

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

17 Section 8. Report to General Assembly.

18 Two years after the effective date of this section, the
19 agency shall submit a report to the General Assembly on the
20 implementation of the program.

21 Section 9. Effective date.

22 This act shall take effect July 1, 2007, or immediately,
23 whichever is later.