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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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**HOUSE BILL**

**No. 886**      Session of  
2007

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INTRODUCED BY MARKOSEK, BISHOP, BOYD, CALTAGIRONE, DALEY,  
FREEMAN, GEIST, GEORGE, GRUCELA, HARHART, HERSHEY, JOSEPHS,  
KORTZ, KULA, MANDERINO, MANN, MILLARD, MURT, O'NEILL,  
PALLONE, PETRARCA, SAINATO, SAYLOR, SIPTROTH, SOLOBAY, SURRA,  
WALKO AND YOUNGBLOOD, MARCH 22, 2007

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS,  
MARCH 22, 2007

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AN ACT

1 Amending the act of June 26, 1992 (P.L.322, No.64), entitled as  
2 amended, "An act providing for Commonwealth support for the  
3 Agriculture Education Loan Forgiveness Program for certain  
4 Pennsylvania residents who graduate from institutions of  
5 higher education and who apply their degrees in family farm  
6 operations, the practice of veterinary medicine or teaching  
7 an agriculture curriculum within this Commonwealth," defining  
8 agriculture-related industry and providing for loan  
9 forgiveness related to work in agriculture-related  
10 industries.

11 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
12 hereby enacts as follows:

13 Section 1. The title and sections 2 and 3 of the act of June  
14 26, 1992 (P.L.322, No.64), known as the Agriculture Education  
15 Loan Forgiveness Act, amended November 29, 2004 (P.L.1392,  
16 No.181), are amended to read:

AN ACT

18 Providing for Commonwealth support for the Agriculture Education  
19 Loan Forgiveness Program for certain Pennsylvania residents  
20 who graduate from institutions of higher education and who

1 apply their degrees in [family farm operations] agriculture-  
2 related industries, the practice of veterinary medicine or  
3 teaching an agriculture curriculum within this Commonwealth.

4 Section 2. Definitions.

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

8 "Agency." The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance  
9 Agency.

10 "Agricultural products." Crops, livestock and livestock  
11 products, and commodities, including, but not limited to:

12 (1) Field crops, including corn, wheat, oats, rye,  
13 barley, hay, potatoes and dry beans.

14 (2) Fruits, including apples, peaches, grapes, cherries  
15 and berries.

16 (3) Vegetables, including tomatoes, snap beans, cabbage,  
17 carrots, beets, onions and mushrooms.

18 (4) Horticultural specialties, including nursery stock,  
19 ornamental shrubs, ornamental trees and flowers.

20 (5) Cattle, sheep, hogs, goats, horses, poultry,  
21 furbearing animals, milk, eggs and furs.

22 (6) Timber, wood and other wood products derived from  
23 trees.

24 (7) Aquatic plants and animals and their by-products.

25 (8) Products derived from any of the above and other  
26 products derived from the business of farming, including such  
27 other products as may be manufactured, derived or prepared  
28 from the heretofore mentioned products, raw or processed,  
29 which are used as food for man or animals.

30 "Agriculture-related industry." An industry, including, but

1 not limited to, a farm that produces agricultural products for  
2 commercial purposes. The Department of Agriculture shall  
3 annually determine and publish a list of agriculture-related  
4 industries in the Pennsylvania Bulletin.

5 ["Family farm." The real property of a farm owned by members  
6 of an immediate family or by a family farm corporation used for  
7 the production, for commercial purposes, of agricultural  
8 products.

9 "Family farm corporation." A corporation of which at least  
10 75% of its assets are devoted to the business of agriculture and  
11 at least 75% of each class of stock of the corporation is  
12 continuously owned by members of the immediate family.

13 "Immediate family member." A spouse, child, stepchild,  
14 parent, stepparent, grandparent, brother, stepbrother, sister,  
15 stepsister or like relative-in-law of an owner of real  
16 property.]

17 "Mixed practice of veterinary medicine." As described by the  
18 American Veterinary Medical Association, that type of clinical  
19 veterinary practice or consultation which deals with more than  
20 one categorical species, including, but not limited to,  
21 agricultural animals.

22 "Practice of veterinary medicine." The practice in the field  
23 of veterinary medicine by any person qualified by educational  
24 training and experience in the science and techniques of  
25 veterinary medicine and who is currently licensed to practice  
26 veterinary medicine by the Pennsylvania State Board of  
27 Veterinary Medicine under the act of December 27, 1974 (P.L.995,  
28 No.326), known as the Veterinary Medicine Practice Act.

29 "Qualified applicant." A resident of this Commonwealth who  
30 meets the criteria in all of the following paragraphs:

- 1 (1) Holds:
- 2 (i) a degree in a field related to the production of  
3 agricultural products from an accredited college or  
4 university;
- 5 (ii) a current certification under the Department of  
6 Education's Certification and Staffing Policies and  
7 Guidelines Number 30-Agriculture Certification or a  
8 successor document; or
- 9 (iii) a degree in the field of veterinary medicine,  
10 from an accredited college or university.

11 (2) Has commenced:

12 (i) [the first year of] full-time employment or work  
13 [on a family farm] in an agriculture-related industry on  
14 or after July 1, 1991;

15 (ii) the first year of full-time employment teaching  
16 an agricultural curriculum at the elementary or secondary  
17 level in a public or private school on or after the  
18 effective date of this subparagraph; or

19 (iii) the practice of veterinary medicine, a portion  
20 of which activity must be for the protection and  
21 enhancement of agricultural animal health and  
22 productivity, on or after July 1, 1991.

23 (3) Has:

24 (i) borrowed through the agency-administered  
25 Guaranteed Student Loan Programs for an educational  
26 institution located in this Commonwealth; or

27 (ii) for individuals who have commenced work under  
28 paragraph (2)(i) or practice under paragraph (2)(iii),  
29 borrowed through the agency-administered Guaranteed  
30 Student Loan Programs for an accredited college or

1 university.

2 "U.S.D.A. certification." Certification by the United States  
3 Department of Agriculture that a graduate veterinarian has  
4 successfully passed an examination and is certified to sign  
5 health certificates allowing the interstate commerce of  
6 agricultural animals and animal products as well as the ability  
7 to certify regulatory testing such as bovine tuberculosis and  
8 brucellosis.

9 "Veterinary medicine." That branch of medicine which deals  
10 with the diagnosis, prognosis, treatment, administration,  
11 prescription, operation or manipulation or application of any  
12 apparatus or appliance for any disease, pain, deformity, defect,  
13 injury, wound or physical condition of any animal or for the  
14 prevention of or the testing for the presence of any disease.

15 Section 3. Agriculture Education Loan Forgiveness Program.

16 (a) Eligibility.--Qualified applicants who are selected for  
17 the Agriculture Education Loan Forgiveness 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 receive a degree in an  
22 agriculturally related [field] industry.

23 (b) Time.--The agency shall forgive a proportional part of  
24 the applicant's loan for each year that the applicant:

25 (1) is employed full time [on a family farm] in an  
26 agriculture-related industry or works full time [on a family  
27 farm] in an agriculture-related industry, a portion of which  
28 must be located within this Commonwealth;

29 (2) meets the requirements of paragraph (1)(ii) of the  
30 definition of "qualified applicant" in section 2 and is

1 engaged as a full-time teacher of an agricultural curriculum  
2 at the elementary or secondary level in a public or private  
3 school within this Commonwealth; or

4 (3) is engaged in the mixed practice of veterinary  
5 medicine within this Commonwealth, a portion of which  
6 activity must be for the protection and enhancement of  
7 agricultural animal health and productivity, and who has  
8 obtained U.S.D.A. certification.

9 (c) [Maximum forgiveness.--No more than \$2,000 shall be  
10 forgiven in any year, and no more than \$10,000 shall be forgiven  
11 for any applicant. Awards shall be made in accordance with the  
12 procedures established by the agency.] Amounts.--The following  
13 provisions shall apply to the amount of loan forgiveness:

14 (1) For applicants who do not hold a graduate degree in  
15 an agriculture-related industry, no more than \$2,500 shall be  
16 forgiven in any year, and no more than \$12,500 shall be  
17 forgiven for any applicant.

18 (2) For applicants who hold a graduate degree in an  
19 agriculture-related industry, no more than \$3,750 shall be  
20 forgiven in any year, and no more than \$18,750 shall be  
21 forgiven for any applicant.

22 (3) For applicants who hold a degree in the field of  
23 veterinary medicine, no more than \$5,000 shall be forgiven in  
24 any year, and no more than \$25,000 shall be forgiven for any  
25 applicant.

26 Section 2. This act shall take effect in 60 days.