

By Senator Ring

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to student loans; creating s. 43.45,
3 F.S.; defining terms; requiring the Justice
4 Administrative Commission and the Office of the
5 Attorney General to implement a student loan
6 assistance program to assist a career assistant state
7 attorney, assistant public defender, assistant
8 attorney general, or assistant statewide prosecutor in
9 the repayment of eligible student loans; establishing
10 requirements for the administration of the program;
11 requiring the administering body to make payments
12 based on the length of employment of the eligible
13 career attorney and the availability of funds;
14 providing for the cessation of payments in certain
15 circumstances; providing funding; requiring the
16 Justice Administrative Commission and the Office of
17 the Attorney General to develop procedures to
18 administer the program; providing an effective date.

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20 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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22 Section 1. Section 43.45, Florida Statutes, is created to
23 read:

24 43.45 Student loan assistance program; administration.—

25 (1) As used in this section, the term:

26 (a) "Administering body" means:

27 1. If the eligible career attorney is employed as an
28 assistant state attorney or assistant public defender, the
29 Justice Administrative Commission.

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30 2. If the eligible career attorney is employed as an
31 assistant attorney general or assistant statewide prosecutor,
32 the Office of the Attorney General.

33 (b) "Eligible attorney" means an assistant state attorney,
34 assistant public defender, assistant attorney general, or
35 assistant statewide prosecutor.

36 (c) "Eligible career attorney" means an eligible attorney
37 who has completed at least 3 years, but not more than 12 years,
38 of continuous service as an eligible attorney, regardless of
39 whether the eligible attorney had a break in employment of less
40 than 2 weeks while transferring to another employer of eligible
41 attorneys.

42 (d) "Eligible student loan" means a loan that is not in
43 default and that was issued pursuant to the Higher Education Act
44 of 1965, 20 U.S.C. ss. 1001 et seq., as amended, to a person who
45 is now an eligible career attorney to fund his or her law school
46 education.

47 (e) "Employment anniversary" means the anniversary of the
48 date that an eligible career attorney commenced employment as an
49 eligible attorney.

50 (2) The administering body shall implement a student loan
51 assistance program for eligible career attorneys. The purpose of
52 the program is to provide financial assistance to eligible
53 career attorneys for the repayment of eligible student loans.

54 (3) The student loan assistance program is administered in
55 the following manner:

56 (a) Within 30 days after the employment anniversary of an
57 eligible career attorney, such attorney must submit to his or
58 her employer a certification affidavit on a form authorized by

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59 the administering body which certifies that the eligible career
60 attorney had one or more eligible student loans as of his or her
61 last employment anniversary. If the employer signs the
62 certification affidavit, the employer shall submit the affidavit
63 to the administering body within 60 days after the most recent
64 employment anniversary of the eligible career attorney.

65 (b) Upon receipt of a certification affidavit, the
66 administering body shall make a maximum payment of:

67 1. If the eligible career attorney has at least 3 years,
68 but not more than 6 years, of continuous service as an eligible
69 career attorney, \$3,000.

70 2. If the eligible career attorney has more than 6 years,
71 but not more than 12 years, of continuous service as an eligible
72 career attorney, \$5,000.

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74 If appropriated funds are insufficient to provide the maximum
75 payment for each eligible career attorney, the administering
76 body shall prorate payments by an equal percentage reduction.

77 (c) A payment under paragraph (b) shall be made by the
78 administering body:

79 1. To the lender of the eligible student loan;

80 2. Between July 1 and July 31 of the next fiscal year
81 following receipt of the certification affidavit by the
82 administering body;

83 3. For the benefit of the eligible career attorney named in
84 the certification affidavit and for the purpose of satisfying
85 his or her eligible student loan obligation; and

86 4. For the eligible student loan that has the highest
87 current interest rate if the eligible career attorney holds more

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88 than one eligible student loan.

89 (d) Payments under paragraph (b) cease upon totaling
90 \$44,000 per eligible career attorney or upon full satisfaction
91 of the eligible student loan, whichever occurs first.

92 (4) The student loan assistance program may be funded
93 annually contingent upon a specific appropriation in the General
94 Appropriations Act for the student loan assistance program.

95 (5) The Justice Administrative Commission and the Office of
96 the Attorney General shall develop procedures to administer this
97 section.

98 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2016.