
SENATE BILL 5615

State of Washington

63rd Legislature

2013 Regular Session

By Senators Frockt, Becker, Cleveland, Keiser, Kohl-Welles, Schlicher, Kline, Conway, and Chase

Read first time 02/05/13. Referred to Committee on Health Care .

1 AN ACT Relating to the health professional loan repayment and
2 scholarship program; amending RCW 28B.115.050 and 28B.115.080; and
3 creating a new section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that most medical
6 students and dental students graduate from their professional schools
7 with large student loan debts. Despite many of these students wanting
8 to practice in rural parts of the state, these debts preclude many of
9 these students from doing so. The health professional loan repayment
10 and scholarship program assists health care professionals by providing
11 them loan repayment and scholarship opportunities. It also benefits
12 the state by ensuring access to health care professionals in rural
13 areas of the state by tying loan repayment and scholarship plans to
14 agreements to practice in these areas.

15 (2) The legislature further finds that the recent economic downturn
16 has severely curtailed the activities of the health professional loan
17 repayment and scholarship program in a time when these programs are
18 needed to ensure that people are able to access health care coverage in
19 all parts of the state.

1 (3) The legislature, therefore, intends to specify that the loan
2 repayment awards and scholarships are to be made available to medical
3 residents and dental students who agree to work with hospitals and
4 federally qualified health centers.

5 (4) The legislature further intends that the planning committee of
6 the office of student financial assistance seek funding sources, as
7 well as state funds, to help pay for the loan repayment and scholarship
8 program.

9 **Sec. 2.** RCW 28B.115.050 and 2011 1st sp.s. c 11 s 206 are each
10 amended to read as follows:

11 (1) The office shall establish a planning committee to assist it in
12 developing criteria for the selection of participants. The office
13 shall include on the planning committee representatives of the
14 department, the department of social and health services, appropriate
15 representatives from health care facilities, representatives from the
16 dental quality assurance commission, the medical quality assurance
17 commission, provider groups, consumers, the state board for community
18 and technical colleges, the superintendent of public instruction, and
19 other appropriate public and private agencies and organizations. The
20 criteria may require that some of the participants meet the definition
21 of "needy student" under RCW 28B.92.030.

22 (2) The planning committee must seek private funding and grant
23 opportunities to supplement state funds provided for the health
24 professional loan repayment and scholarship program.

25 **Sec. 3.** RCW 28B.115.080 and 2011 1st sp.s. c 11 s 208 are each
26 amended to read as follows:

27 ~~((After June 1, 1992,))~~ The office, in consultation with the
28 department and the department of social and health services, shall:

29 (1) Establish the annual award amount for each credentialed health
30 care profession which shall be based upon an assessment of reasonable
31 annual eligible expenses involved in training and education for each
32 credentialed health care profession. The annual award amount may be
33 established at a level less than annual eligible expenses. The annual
34 award amount shall be established by the office for each eligible
35 health profession. The awards shall not be paid for more than a
36 maximum of five years per individual;

1 (2) Determine any scholarship awards for prospective physicians in
2 such a manner to require the recipients declare an interest in serving
3 in rural areas of the state of Washington. Preference for scholarships
4 shall be given to students who reside in a rural physician shortage
5 area or a nonshortage rural area of the state prior to admission to the
6 eligible education and training program in medicine. Highest
7 preference shall be given to students seeking admission who are
8 recommended by sponsoring communities and who declare the intent of
9 serving as a physician in a rural area. The office may require the
10 sponsoring community located in a nonshortage rural area to financially
11 contribute to the eligible expenses of a medical student if the student
12 will serve in the nonshortage rural area;

13 (3) Determine any loan repayment awards or scholarships available
14 for medical students who agree to serve a residency in a rural
15 physician shortage area or a nonshortage rural area of the state. The
16 planning committee in RCW 28B.115.050 must establish the required
17 service obligation in the rural area to retain eligibility for the loan
18 repayment award and work with hospitals in these areas to develop
19 residency opportunities;

20 (4) Determine any scholarship awards for prospective dentists in
21 such a manner to require the recipients to declare an interest in
22 serving in rural areas of the state of Washington. Preference for
23 scholarships must be given to students who reside in an area served by
24 federally qualified health centers prior to admission to the eligible
25 education and training program in dentistry. Highest preference must
26 be given to students seeking admission who are recommended by
27 sponsoring communities and who declare the intent of serving as a
28 dentist for a federally qualified health center;

29 (5) Determine any loan repayment awards for recent dental graduates
30 who practice at a federally qualified health center after graduation.
31 The planning committee in RCW 28B.115.050 must establish the required
32 service obligation in the federally qualified health center to retain
33 eligibility for the loan repayment award;

34 (6) Establish the required service obligation for each credentialed
35 health care profession, which shall be no less than three years or no
36 more than five years. The required service obligation may be based
37 upon the amount of the scholarship or loan repayment award such that

1 higher awards involve longer service obligations on behalf of the
2 participant;

3 ((+4)) (7) Determine eligible education and training programs for
4 purposes of the scholarship portion of the program;

5 ((+5)) (8) Honor loan repayment and scholarship contract terms
6 negotiated between the office and participants prior to May 21, 1991,
7 concerning loan repayment and scholarship award amounts and service
8 obligations authorized under this chapter ((~~28B.115, 28B.104,~~)) or
9 chapter 70.180 RCW.

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