

The House Committee on Agriculture and Consumer Affairs offers the following substitute to HB 62:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 7 of Chapter 3 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
2 relating to scholarships, loans, and grants, so as to change certain provisions relating to a
3 service cancelable loan fund and authorized types of service cancelable educational loans;
4 to provide for a State Veterinary Education Board and its membership, powers, and duties;
5 to provide for purchases of loans made for educational purposes to students who have
6 completed a veterinary medical degree program; to provide for consideration for such
7 purchases in the form of services rendered through the practice of certain veterinary medicine
8 specialties in this state; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

9 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

10 style="text-align:center">**SECTION 1.**

11 Article 7 of Chapter 3 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
12 scholarships, loans, and grants, is amended by revising paragraph (3) of subsection (b) of
13 Code Section 20-3-374, relating to a service cancelable loan fund and authorized types of
14 service cancelable educational loans, as follows:

15 ~~"(3) DOCTORS OF VETERINARY MEDICINE. The authority is authorized to make service~~
16 ~~cancelable educational loans to residents of Georgia who are enrolled in school in the~~
17 ~~field of doctor of veterinary medicine, including veterinary surgery, obstetrics, dentistry,~~
18 ~~and all other specialties of veterinary medicine. Loans may be made to students enrolled~~
19 ~~in a veterinary college or in a veterinary division of a university or college accredited by~~
20 ~~the American Veterinary Medical Association who are pursuing a program of study~~
21 ~~leading to the degree of doctor of veterinary medicine or its equivalent. The authority~~
22 ~~shall from time to time, by regulation, designate specialties within the veterinary science~~
23 ~~field that qualify for service cancelable loans under this paragraph. In designating the~~
24 ~~qualified specialties, the authority shall give preference to those specialties in which there~~
25 ~~are shortages of persons trained in that specialty in the State of Georgia. Loans made~~
26 ~~under this paragraph need not be limited to students attending a school located in the~~

27 ~~State of Georgia. However, any and all loans made under this paragraph shall be~~
 28 ~~conditional upon the student agreeing that the loan shall be repaid by the student either:~~
 29 ~~(A) Practicing in the approved qualified field in a geographical area in the State of~~
 30 ~~Georgia approved by the authority. For service repayment, the loan shall be repaid at~~
 31 ~~a rate of one year of service for each academic year of study or its equivalent for which~~
 32 ~~a loan is made to the student under this paragraph; or~~
 33 ~~(B) In cash repayment with assessed interest thereon in accordance with the terms and~~
 34 ~~conditions of a promissory note that shall be executed by the student.~~
 35 ~~A geographical area for service repayment through services rendered shall not be~~
 36 ~~approved unless the area is a rural or sparsely populated area of the state or in a~~
 37 ~~community of 10,000 population or less according to the United States decennial census~~
 38 ~~of 2000 or any future such census and experiencing a shortage of licensed veterinarians~~
 39 ~~to meet the needs of owners or producers of farm animals used for or in connection with~~
 40 ~~the production of commercial food products. If the loan is not repaid by services~~
 41 ~~rendered, it must be repaid by the student in cash with interest thereon in accordance with~~
 42 ~~the terms of the promissory note executed by the student Reserved; and"~~

43 SECTION 2.

44 Said article is further amended by adding a new part as follows:

45 "Part 6A

46 20-3-518.1.

47 As used in this part, the term:

- 48 (1) 'Board' means the State Veterinary Education Board created under Code Section
 49 20-3-518.2.
 50 (2) 'Commissioner' means the Commissioner of Agriculture.
 51 (3) 'Department' means the Department of Agriculture.

52 20-3-518.2.

53 (a) There shall be a State Veterinary Education Board which shall consist of:

- 54 (1) The Commissioner of Agriculture or his or her designee;
 55 (2) The Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine of the University of Georgia or his
 56 or her designee;
 57 (3) The Dean of the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences of the
 58 University of Georgia or his or her designee;

59 (4) A person actively engaged in the production of livestock in this state, to be appointed
 60 by the Governor, who shall serve for a term of four years and until his or her successor
 61 is qualified and appointed. The term of the initial member appointed under this
 62 paragraph shall commence on the effective date of this part; and

63 (5) A person actively engaged in the private practice of veterinary medicine in this state,
 64 whose practice includes but is not necessarily limited to food animals, to be appointed by
 65 the State Board of Veterinary Medicine, who shall serve for a term of four years and until
 66 his or her successor is qualified and appointed. The term of the initial member appointed
 67 under this paragraph shall commence on the effective date of this part.

68 (b) Any vacancies on the board shall be filled in the same manner as the original
 69 appointment.

70 (c) The board shall elect annually a chairperson and also a vice chairperson to serve in the
 71 absence or inability of the chairperson. The board shall meet at least once each year at
 72 such time and place as may be fixed by the board. Special meetings shall be held upon the
 73 call of the chairperson. Three members of the board shall constitute a quorum for the
 74 transaction of business. No official action shall be taken by the board except upon the
 75 affirmative vote of at least three members of the board.

76 (d) The board shall be attached to the Department of Agriculture for administrative
 77 purposes only, pursuant to Code Section 50-4-3.

78 20-3-518.3.

79 (a) The board may provide for the purchase of loans made to students who are residents
 80 of Georgia for educational purposes who have completed a program of study in the field
 81 of doctor of veterinary medicine or its equivalent and are authorized to practice veterinary
 82 medicine in this state, with services in the form of the practice of veterinary medicine while
 83 residing in this state to be rendered as consideration for such loan purchases.

84 (b) Only persons whose veterinary medicine practices in this state include food animal
 85 specialties shall be eligible for loan purchases under this part.

86 20-3-518.4.

87 (a)(1) Persons whose applications are approved and enter into a loan purchase agreement
 88 with the board shall receive a loan purchase in a total amount to be determined by the
 89 board, but not exceeding \$80,000.00 per person, as provided by Code Section 20-3-518.3.
 90 The loan purchases shall be paid in such manner as the board shall determine.

91 (2) The loan purchases to be granted to each applicant shall be based upon the condition
 92 that the consideration for such loan purchases shall be services to be rendered by the
 93 applicant after entering into a loan purchase agreement with the board by practicing his

94 or her profession in a board approved rural county in Georgia of 35,000 population or less
 95 according to the United States decennial census of 2000 or any future such census.

96 (3) For time served after entering into a loan purchase agreement with the board in
 97 practicing his or her profession in such board approved location, the applicant shall
 98 receive a loan purchase at a rate equivalent to \$20,000.00 per 12 months of service;
 99 provided, however, that the total purchase amount shall not exceed the maximum
 100 specified in paragraph (1) of this subsection.

101 (b) The board shall not enter into new loan purchase agreements with more than five
 102 persons per year; provided, however, that the total sum of loan purchases from state
 103 appropriations for which the board contractually obligates itself in any fiscal year shall not
 104 exceed the amount of funds for such loan purchase purposes specified in annual
 105 appropriations Acts. Funds in the loan purchase fund account that are not expended or
 106 contractually obligated by the board for loan purchases during any fiscal year shall lapse.

107 20-3-518.5.

108 (a) Each applicant before being granted a loan purchase shall enter into a contract with the
 109 board agreeing to the terms and conditions upon which the loan purchase is granted, which
 110 contract shall include such terms and provisions as will carry out the full purpose and intent
 111 of this part. The form of such contract shall be prepared and approved by the Attorney
 112 General, and each contract shall be signed by the chairperson of the board and by the
 113 applicant.

114 (b) The board shall have the authority to cancel the loan purchase contract of any applicant
 115 at any time for any cause deemed sufficient by the board, provided that such authority shall
 116 not be arbitrarily or unreasonably exercised.

117 20-3-518.6.

118 The funds necessary for the loan purchases provided for by this part and to administer the
 119 terms of this part shall come from funds made available to the board from appropriations
 120 for such purpose. There shall be no compensation to board members for attending
 121 meetings or travel in the performance of their official duties.

122 20-3-518.7.

123 The board shall adopt such rules and regulations as are reasonable and necessary to
 124 implement this part."

125 **SECTION 3.**

126 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.