

House Bill 1256

By: Representatives Berry of the 56<sup>th</sup>, Herring of the 145<sup>th</sup>, McQueen of the 61<sup>st</sup>, Park of the 107<sup>th</sup>, Burnough of the 77<sup>th</sup>, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

1 To amend Part 3 of Article 7 of Chapter 3 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia  
2 Annotated, relating to the Georgia Student Finance Authority, so as to provide for student  
3 loan repayment for public school teachers who graduated from an eligible postsecondary  
4 educational institution in Georgia and who have taught for at least five years in a public  
5 school in this state; to provide for definitions; to provide for eligibility; to provide for student  
6 loan repayment agreements and conditions; to provide for maximum student loan repayment  
7 amounts; to provide for rules and regulations; to provide for an appropriations contingency;  
8 to provide for related matters; to provide a short title; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other  
9 purposes.

10 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

11 **SECTION 1.**

12 This Act shall be known and may be cited as the "Georgia Appreciation for Educators Act."

**SECTION 2.**

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14 Part 3 of Article 7 of Chapter 3 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,  
15 relating to the Georgia Student Finance Authority, is amended by adding a new subpart to  
16 read as follows:

17 "Subpart 7D

18 20-3-467.

19 (a) As used in this Code section, the term:

20 (1) 'Eligible applicant' means a person who:

21 (A) Is a legal resident of the State of Georgia;

22 (B) Graduated from an eligible postsecondary institution; and

23 (C) Is currently employed as a teacher in a public school in this state and has been so  
24 employed for at least five years.

25 (2) 'Eligible postsecondary institution' shall have the same meaning as set forth in Code  
26 Section 20-3-519.

27 (3) 'Recipient' means an eligible applicant who applied for and was approved by the  
28 authority for student loan repayment under this Code section.

29 (4) 'Student loan' means debt incurred by a recipient that is:

30 (A) Evidenced by a promissory note which required the funds received to be used to  
31 pay for the cost of attendance for a course of study of the recipient;

32 (B) Not in default at the time of application for repayment under this Code section; and

33 (C) Not subject to an existing service obligation or to repayment through another  
34 student loan repayment or loan forgiveness program or to repayment as a condition of  
35 employment.

36 (5) 'Teacher' shall have the same meaning as set forth in Code Section 20-2-942.

37 (b) The authority is authorized to approve the applications of eligible applicants in  
38 accordance with rules and regulations established by the authority governing the student  
39 loan repayment process.

40 (c) The authority is authorized to provide for the repayment of student loans held by a  
41 recipient in consideration of the recipient performing services in the form of teaching in a  
42 public school in this state for not less than five years.

43 (d)(1) Each recipient, before being granted any student loan repayment, shall enter into  
44 a student loan repayment agreement with the authority agreeing to the terms and  
45 conditions upon which the student loan repayment is granted, including such terms and  
46 conditions set forth in this Code section.

47 (2) The authority shall have the power to terminate a student loan repayment agreement  
48 at any time for any cause deemed sufficient by the authority, provided that such power  
49 shall not be arbitrarily or unreasonably exercised.

50 (e) Each student loan repayment agreement entered into with the authority pursuant to this  
51 Code section shall be signed by the director of the authority and by the recipient and shall:

52 (1) Provide for repayment of the recipient's student loans in a total amount as the  
53 authority shall determine based on available appropriations, but not exceeding the total  
54 student loan debt of the recipient, to be paid out over a term of not more than five years  
55 in installments made on an annual basis;

56 (2) Provide that any payment made by the authority under a student loan repayment  
57 agreement shall be made in consideration of services rendered by the recipient as a  
58 teacher in a public school in this state; and

59 (3) Require that the recipient remain a legal resident of this state as established by rules  
60 and regulations of the authority and be employed as a teacher in a public school in this  
61 state at all times during the term of the agreement.

62 (f) The authority shall adopt such rules and regulations as are reasonable and necessary to  
63 implement the provisions of this Code section.

64 (g) Student loan repayment for recipients having entered into a student loan repayment  
65 agreement with the authority pursuant to this Code section shall be contingent upon the  
66 appropriation of funds by the General Assembly for the purposes of this Code section in  
67 annual appropriations Acts of the General Assembly."

68

**SECTION 3.**

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