

Senate Bill 237

By: Senators Hatchett of the 50th and Hodges of the 3rd

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 peace officers; to provide for definitions; to provide for eligibility
4 requirements; to provide for continued eligibility requirements; to provide for student loan
5 repayment agreements and conditions; to provide for maximum student loan repayment
6 amounts; to provide for rules and regulations; to provide for appropriations contingency; to
7 provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

8 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

9 **SECTION 1.**

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

"Subpart 7A

20-3-460.

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

(1) 'Course of study' means an undergraduate degree program.

(2) 'Eligible applicant' means a person who:

(A) Is a legal resident of this state as established by rules and regulations of the authority;

(B) Became employed as a full-time peace officer in this state for the first time on or after January 1, 2023, is currently employed as a full-time peace officer in this state, and has been so employed for at least one year; and

(C) Has completed a course of study or is enrolled, during such employment as a full-time peace officer, in a course of study.

(3) 'Peace officer' has the same meaning as provided in Code Section 35-8-2.

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

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

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

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

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

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

(c) The authority is authorized to provide for the repayment of student loans held by a recipient in consideration of the recipient performing services as a full-time peace officer. A student loan repayment made pursuant to this Code section shall be paid in such manner as the authority shall establish by rules and regulations.

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

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

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

(1) Provide for repayment of the recipient's student loans in a total amount to be determined by the authority, but not exceeding a maximum of \$20,000.00 or the total student loan debt of the recipient, whichever is less, to be paid out in installments made each 12 months over a term of not more than five years;

(2) Provide that any payment made by the authority under a student loan repayment agreement shall be made in consideration of services rendered by the recipient as a full-time peace officer;

(3) Provide that the authority shall make a payment toward the recipient's student loans, in an amount set forth in the agreement, for each 12 months the recipient is employed full-time as a peace officer in this state during the term of the agreement; and

(4) Require that the recipient remain a legal resident of this state as established by rules and regulations of the authority and be employed as a full-time peace officer in this state at all times during the term of the agreement.

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

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

70 **SECTION 2.**

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