

The House Committee on Higher Education offers the following substitute to HB 163:

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 medical examiners employed by the Division of Forensic Sciences of the  
4 Georgia Bureau of Investigation; to provide for definitions; to provide for eligibility  
5 requirements; to provide for continued eligibility requirements; to provide for student loan  
6 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 repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

9 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

10 **SECTION 1.**

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

"Subpart 7A

20-3-460.

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

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

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

(B) Is a physician duly licensed and authorized to practice medicine in this state under Article 2 of Chapter 34 of Title 43; and

(C) Became employed as a full-time medical examiner by the Division of Forensic Sciences of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation on or after January 1, 2023, is currently employed as a full-time medical examiner by the Division of Forensic Sciences of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, and has been so employed for at least one year.

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

(3) 'Student loan' means debt incurred by an eligible applicant that is:

(A) Evidenced by a promissory note which required the funds received to be used to pay for the cost of attendance for the undergraduate, graduate, or professional education of the eligible applicant;

(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 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 recipients in consideration of the recipient performing services in the form of the practice

40 of medicine as a full-time medical examiner employed by the Division of Forensic  
41 Sciences of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation.

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

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

49 (e) Each student loan repayment agreement entered into under the authority granted in this  
50 Code section shall be signed by the director of the authority and by the recipient and shall:

51 (1) Provide for repayment of the recipient's student loans in a total amount as the  
52 authority shall determine, but not to exceed a maximum of \$120,000.00 or the total  
53 student loan debt of the recipient, whichever is less, to be paid out over a term of not  
54 more than five years in installments made on an annual basis;

55 (2) Provide that any payment made by the authority under a student loan repayment  
56 agreement shall be made in consideration of services rendered by the recipient practicing  
57 medicine as a full-time medical examiner employed by the Division of Forensic Sciences  
58 of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation; and

59 (3) Require that the recipient shall remain a legal resident of the state as established by  
60 rules and regulations of the authority; maintain licensure as a physician authorized to  
61 practice medicine in this state under Article 2 of Chapter 34 of Title 43; and be employed  
62 as a full-time medical examiner by the Division of Forensic Sciences of the Georgia  
63 Bureau of Investigation 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.