

The Senate Committee on Public Safety offered the following substitute to SB 237:

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 provide for an effective date; to repeal conflicting laws; and
8 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:

14 "Subpart 7A

15 20-3-460.

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

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

18 (2) 'Eligible applicant' means a person who is a legal resident of this state as established
19 by rules and regulations of the authority and:

20 (A) Became employed as a full-time peace officer in this state for the first time on or
21 after January 1, 2023, is currently employed as a full-time peace officer in this state,
22 and has completed a course of study; or

23 (B) Is currently employed as a full-time peace officer in this state, has been so
24 employed for at least a year, and is enrolled in a course of study in the field of criminal
25 justice.

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

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

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

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

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, but not exceeding a maximum of \$20,000.00 or the total
54 student loan debt of the recipient, whichever is less, to be paid out over a term of not
55 more than five years 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 full-time peace officer; 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 full-time peace officer in this state
61 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 2.**

69 This Act shall become effective upon its approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law
70 without such approval.

71 **SECTION 3.**

72 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.