

Chapter 311

(House Bill 1576)

AN ACT concerning

Prince George's County – Student Loan Refinancing Authority

PG 419–17

FOR the purpose of expressing the intent of the General Assembly for Prince George's County to study whether a higher education financial assistance program should be offered in the county; requiring Prince George's County, on or before a certain date, to perform certain actions related to a study of a student loan refinancing program in Prince George's County, including reviewing the Prince George's County Supplemental Higher Educational Loan Authority and performing a certain feasibility and demand study; requiring the Authority to meet certain requirements if a certain loan authority is reestablished or established; providing for the termination of this Act; and generally relating to a student loan refinancing authority in Prince George's County.

Preamble

WHEREAS, Chapter 704 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 1986 authorized Prince George's County to create an entity known as the Prince George's County Supplemental Higher Educational Loan Authority; and

WHEREAS, In accordance with Chapter 704 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 1986, the Prince George's County Council created the Prince George's County Supplemental Higher Educational Loan Authority through Council Bill 99–1986; and

WHEREAS, It appears that the Prince George's County Supplemental Higher Educational Loan Authority has been defunct for at least 20 years; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 296 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 2016 authorized Montgomery County to study aspects of implementing a Montgomery County Student Loan Refinancing Authority and Chapter 290 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 2016 requires a study of the expansion or creation of an appropriate bonding authority for the refinancing of student loans in Maryland; and

WHEREAS, The recent legislation regarding the study of higher education loan authorities, both at the county level and statewide, has generated interest in reviewing the Prince George's County Supplemental Higher Educational Loan Authority; now, therefore,

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That:

(a) It is the intent of the General Assembly that Prince George's County study whether a program of financial assistance consisting of affordable grants, loans, and other aids should be offered in Prince George's County to enable individuals, as determined by the county, to obtain a postsecondary education.

(b) On or before December 1, 2018, Prince George's County shall:

(1) Review and study the Prince George's County Supplemental Higher Educational Loan Authority, including:

(i) Determining the functions the Authority performed and the actions the Authority took when it was a functioning entity;

(ii) Determining the reasons why the Authority is now defunct; and

(iii) 1. Determining whether changes could be made to the Authority that would enable it to be a functioning entity that meets the needs of Prince George's County; or

2. Determining whether the provisions of law for the Authority should be repealed, and if so, whether another entity should be created that would better meet the needs of Prince George's County;

(2) Perform a feasibility and demand study for a student loan refinancing program in Prince George's County, including a determination of categories of individuals who might benefit from the program such as county residents, graduates of the county public school system, and individuals employed by the county government or public school system;

(3) Assess the potential benefit to recruitment and retention of county and school system employees of a student loan refinancing program in Prince George's County;

(4) Study the operation of student loan refinancing programs in other systems, including operating costs; and

(5) (i) Hold public hearings on a student loan refinancing program in Prince George's County; and

(ii) Provide an opportunity for public comment.

(c) (1) If Prince George's County reestablishes the Prince George's County Supplemental Higher Educational Loan Authority or a similar student loan refinancing authority, the authority shall meet the requirements of this subsection.

(2) The authority shall be subject to:

- (i) The Prince George's County public ethics law; and
- (ii) The Open Meetings Act under Title 3 of the General Provisions

Article.

(3) The provisions of the Prince George's County Charter do not apply to the authority unless the governing body of Prince George's County expressly provides by law that a charter provision applies to the authority.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2017. It shall remain effective for a period of 2 years and, at the end of June 30, 2019, with no further action required by the General Assembly, this Act shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.

Approved by the Governor, April 18, 2017.