

HOUSE BILL 47

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5lr0811

By: **Delegates Luedtke, Smith, and A. Washington**

Introduced and read first time: January 19, 2015

Assigned to: Ways and Means

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Special Education – Loan Assistance Repayment and Paraprofessional Training**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring the Office of Student Financial Assistance of the Maryland
4 Higher Education Commission to assist in the repayment of the amount of any
5 higher education loan owed by a public school teacher in the State who has taught
6 in Maryland for a certain number of years as a special education teacher and meets
7 other qualifications; requiring the Office of Student Financial Assistance to adopt
8 certain regulations that establish priority for participation in the Janet L. Hoffman
9 Loan Assistance Repayment Program for an individual who is employed in a public
10 school as a special education teacher, a speech–language pathologist, or a
11 paraprofessional and meets other qualifications; requiring the State Department of
12 Education to study certain methods and make certain recommendations for
13 improving the training of paraprofessional school employees; requiring the
14 Department to report to the General Assembly on or before a certain date; and
15 generally relating to loan assistance repayment for special education teachers,
16 speech–language pathologists, and paraprofessionals and improving the training of
17 paraprofessionals.

18 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
19 Article – Education
20 Section 18–1502 and 18–1503
21 Annotated Code of Maryland
22 (2014 Replacement Volume and 2014 Supplement)

23 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
24 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

25 **Article – Education**

26 18–1502.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (a) There is a program of loan assistance repayment known as the Janet L.
2 Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program in the State.

3 (b) The Office of Student Financial Assistance shall assist in the repayment of
4 the amount of any higher education loan owed by an individual who:

5 (1) (i) Receives a graduate, professional, or undergraduate degree from:

6 1. A college or university in the State of Maryland; or

7 2. A school of law; or

8 (ii) Receives a Resident Teacher Certificate (RTC) from the
9 Department after completing an alternative teaching preparation program approved by the
10 State Superintendent;

11 (2) Obtains eligible employment;

12 (3) Receives an income that is less than the maximum eligible total income
13 levels established by the Office, including any additional sources of income; and

14 (4) Satisfies any other criteria established by the Office.

15 (c) Subject to the provisions of subsection (b) of this section, the Office shall assist
16 in the repayment of the amount of any higher education loan owed by a public school
17 teacher in the State who:

18 (1) Has taught in Maryland for at least 2 years:

19 (i) In science, technology, engineering, or math subjects; [or]

20 (ii) In a school in which at least 75% of the students are enrolled in
21 the free and reduced lunch program in the State; **OR**

22 **(III) AS A SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER; and**

23 (2) Has received the highest performance evaluation rating for the most
24 recent year available in the county in which the teacher taught.

25 (d) (1) A grant awarded under subsection (c) of this section shall be known as
26 the Nancy Grasmick Teacher Award.

27 (2) A recipient of a Nancy Grasmick Teacher Award shall be known as a
28 Nancy Grasmick Teacher Scholar.

1 (e) An applicant for assistance in the repayment of a commercial loan shall
2 demonstrate to the Office that the commercial loan was used for tuition, educational
3 expenses, or living expenses for graduate or undergraduate study.

4 (f) Assistance in the repayment of a loan from an entity set forth in §
5 18–1501(c)(2) of this subtitle shall require the approval of the Office.

6 (g) Subject to the provisions of subsection (b) of this section, the Office shall assist
7 in the repayment of the amount of any higher education loan owed by a licensed clinical
8 alcohol and drug counselor, a licensed clinical marriage and family therapy counselor, or a
9 licensed clinical professional counselor whose practice is located in a high–need geographic
10 area of the State as determined by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

11 18–1503.

12 (a) The Office of Student Financial Assistance shall adopt regulations to
13 establish:

14 (1) The maximum starting income for eligibility in the Janet L. Hoffman
15 Loan Assistance Repayment Program;

16 (2) The maximum total income for eligibility in the Janet L. Hoffman Loan
17 Assistance Repayment Program, including any additional sources of income;

18 (3) That priority for participation in the Program shall be given to an
19 individual who:

20 (i) Graduated from an institution of higher education in the last 3
21 years;

22 (ii) Is a resident of the State;

23 (iii) Is employed on a full–time basis; and

24 (iv) 1. Provides, as the principal part of the individual’s
25 employment, legal services to low–income residents in the State who cannot afford legal
26 services, nursing services in nursing shortage areas in the State as defined in § 18–802 of
27 this title, or other services in an eligible field of employment in which there is a shortage of
28 qualified practitioners to low–income or underserved residents or areas of the State; [or]

29 2. For teacher applicants only[, qualifies]:

30 A. **QUALIFIES** for a Nancy Grasmick Teacher Award; **OR**

31 B. **WORKS IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL IN THE STATE AS A**
32 **SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER; OR**

1 (v) the requirements of special education law.

2 (b) On or before January 1, 2016, the State Department of Education shall report
3 its findings and recommendations, in accordance with § 2–1246 of the State Government
4 Article, to the General Assembly.

5 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June
6 1, 2015.