

Senate Bill 246

By: Senators Hodges of the 3rd, Watson of the 1st, Hatchett of the 50th, Kennedy of the 18th, Tillery of the 19th and others

AS PASSED

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 Georgia Student Finance Authority, so as to provide for inclusive
3 postsecondary education (IPSE) grants; to provide for definitions; to provide for student
4 eligibility; to provide for funding; to provide for policies, procedures, rules, and regulations,
5 including requirements for program authorization; to amend Chapter 10 of Title 49 of the
6 Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the Georgia Board of Health Care
7 Workforce, so as to provide for student loan repayment for certain nursing faculty; to provide
8 for definitions; to authorize the board to approve applications; to provide for eligibility
9 requirements; to provide for continued eligibility requirements; to provide for student loan
10 repayment agreements and conditions; to provide for rules and regulations; to provide for an
11 appropriations contingency; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for
12 other purposes.

13 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

14 **SECTION 1.**

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

18 "Subpart 1219 20-3-494.20 (a) As used in this subpart, the term:21 (1) 'Authorized IPSE program' means an inclusive postsecondary education (IPSE)
22 program for students with intellectual disabilities that has been authorized by the Georgia
23 Student Finance Authority for the purposes of awarding IPSE grants to eligible students.24 (2) 'Intellectual disability' means a person:25 (A) With a cognitive impairment, characterized by significant limitations in:26 (i) Intellectual and cognitive functioning; and27 (ii) Adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive
28 skills; and29 (B) Who is currently, or was formerly, eligible for a free appropriate public education
30 under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.31 (3) 'IPSE grant' means an inclusive postsecondary education (IPSE) grant for education
32 awarded in accordance with this subpart.33 (4) 'Qualified postsecondary institution' means a unit of the University System of
34 Georgia or a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia that offers an authorized
35 IPSE program.36 (b) To be eligible for an IPSE grant, a student shall:37 (1) Meet the requirements provided for in paragraph (1) of subsection (a) and
38 subsection (b) of Code Section 20-3-519.1; and

39 (2) Meet enrollment standards by being admitted and enrolled in an authorized IPSE
40 program at a qualified postsecondary institution.

41 (c) Subject to the amount of funds appropriated by the General Assembly and other
42 available funding, eligible students enrolled in an authorized IPSE program on or before
43 July 1, 2028:

44 (1) Shall receive an IPSE grant in an amount equal to the current academic year standard
45 undergraduate tuition amount at each such student's respective qualified postsecondary
46 institution; and

47 (2) May receive an additional IPSE grant in an amount not to exceed the fees charged
48 for the current academic year for each student's respective IPSE program.

49 (d) The Georgia Student Finance Authority, in collaboration with the University System
50 of Georgia, the Technical College System of Georgia, and the Georgia Council on
51 Developmental Disabilities, shall define such terms and conditions and establish such
52 policies, procedures, rules, and regulations as are reasonable and necessary for the
53 implementation of this subpart, which shall include, but shall not be limited to,
54 requirements that each authorized IPSE program shall:

55 (1) Serve students with intellectual disabilities;

56 (2) Require that a participating student be enrolled in courses with non-disabled peers
57 for at least 50 percent of the courses in which such participating student is enrolled as part
58 of an authorized IPSE program;

59 (3) Provide individual supports and services for the academic and social inclusion of
60 students with intellectual disabilities in academic courses, extracurricular activities, and
61 other aspects of the qualified postsecondary institution's regular postsecondary program;

62 (4) With respect to students with intellectual disabilities participating in the authorized
63 IPSE program, provide a focus on:

64 (A) Academic enrichment;

65 (B) Socialization;

- 66 (C) Independent living skills, including self-advocacy skills; and
67 (D) Integrated work experiences and career skills that lead to gainful employment;
68 (5) Integrate person centered planning in the development of the course of study for each
69 student with an intellectual disability participating in the authorized IPSE program;
70 (6) Create and offer a meaningful credential for students with intellectual disabilities
71 upon the completion of the authorized IPSE program; and
72 (7) Participate with the Georgia Student Finance Authority, the University System of
73 Georgia, the Technical College System of Georgia, and the Georgia Council on
74 Developmental Disabilities in the evaluation of the authorized IPSE program."

75 **SECTION 2.**

76 Chapter 10 of Title 49 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the Georgia
77 Board of Health Care Workforce, is amended by adding a new Code section to read as
78 follows:

79 "49-10-6.

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

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

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

84 (B) Is a registered professional nurse duly licensed and authorized to practice in this
85 state under Article 1 of Chapter 26 of Title 43;

86 (C) Holds a master's or doctoral degree in nursing; and

87 (D) Is currently employed and has been employed for at least one year as a faculty
88 member of a nursing program at a postsecondary institution that is a unit of the
89 University System of Georgia, an institution subject to paragraph (10) of subsection (a)
90 of Code Section 20-3-250.3, or a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia in
91 a position that requires an advanced degree in professional nursing.

- 92 (2) 'Recipient' means an eligible applicant who applied for and was approved by the
93 board for student loan repayment under this Code section.
- 94 (3) 'Student loan' means debt incurred by an eligible applicant that is:
- 95 (A) Evidenced by a promissory note which required the funds received to be used to
96 pay for the cost of attendance for the undergraduate, graduate, or professional education
97 of the eligible applicant;
- 98 (B) Not in default at the time of application for repayment under this Code section; and
99 (C) Not subject to an existing service obligation or to repayment through another
100 student loan repayment or loan forgiveness program or as a condition of employment.
- 101 (b) The board shall have the authority to approve the applications of eligible applicants
102 submitted in accordance with rules and regulations established by the board governing the
103 student loan repayment application process.
- 104 (c) The board is authorized to provide for the repayment of student loans held by recipients
105 in consideration of the recipient serving as a faculty member of a nursing program.
- 106 (d)(1) Each recipient before being granted any student loan repayment shall enter into
107 a student loan repayment agreement with the board agreeing to the terms and conditions
108 upon which the student loan repayment is granted, including such terms and conditions
109 set forth in this Code section.
- 110 (2) The board shall have the power to terminate a student loan repayment agreement at
111 any time for any cause deemed sufficient by the board, provided that such power shall not
112 be arbitrarily or unreasonably exercised.
- 113 (e) Each student loan repayment agreement entered into under the authority granted in this
114 Code section shall:
- 115 (1) Provide for repayment of the recipient's student loans in a total amount to be
116 determined by the board, but not exceeding a maximum of \$100,000.00 or the total
117 student loan debt of the recipient, whichever is less, to be paid out in installments made
118 each 12 months over a term of not more than five years. A student loan repayment made

119 pursuant to this Code section shall be paid in such manner as the board shall establish by
120 rules and regulations;

121 (2) Provide that any payment made by the board under a student loan repayment
122 agreement shall be made in consideration of services rendered by the recipient as a
123 faculty member of a nursing program;

124 (3) Provide that the board shall make a payment toward the recipient's student loans, in
125 an amount set forth in the agreement, for each 12 months the recipient serves as a faculty
126 member of a nursing program during the term of the agreement; and

127 (4) Require that the recipient shall remain a legal resident of the state as established by
128 rules and regulations of the board; maintain licensure as a registered professional nurse
129 under Article 1 of Chapter 26 of Title 43; and be employed as a faculty member of a
130 nursing program at all times during the term of the agreement.

131 (f) The board shall adopt such rules and regulations as are reasonable and necessary to
132 implement the provisions of this Code section.

133 (g) Student loan repayment for recipients having entered into a student loan repayment
134 agreement with the board pursuant to this Code section shall be contingent upon the
135 appropriation of funds by the General Assembly for the purposes of this Code section in
136 annual appropriations Acts of the General Assembly.

137 (h) Nothing in this Code section shall authorize the adjustment of a recipient's
138 compensation based on such recipient's receipt of student loan repayment pursuant to this
139 Code section."

140 **SECTION 3.**

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