

1 **H. B. 2403**

2
3 (By Delegates M. Poling, Perry, Moye,
4 Lawrence and Paxton)

5
6 [Introduced February 13, 2013; referred to the
7 Committee on Education then Finance.]

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9
10 A BILL to amend and reenact §18C-4-2 of the Code of West Virginia,
11 1931, as amended, relating to creating a separate category
12 within the Underwood-Smith Teacher Scholarship Program for
13 scholarships and loan repayment assistance for teaching in
14 high demand teaching fields; application of other provisions
15 of article; limitations on eligibility; definitions;
16 scholarship and grant agreements terms; application of other
17 benefits available; application for repayment assistance;
18 preferences for awards; residency requirements; program
19 promotion; and providing for listings of certain job postings
20 to be made available to recipients and appropriate job
21 placement offices.

22 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:*

23 That §18C-4-2 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended,
24 be amended and reenacted to read as follows:

25 **ARTICLE 4. UNDERWOOD-SMITH TEACHER SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.**

1 **§18C-4-2. Selection criteria and procedures generally; high**
2 **demand teaching fields category; promotion of**
3 **programs.**

4 (a) The Governor shall designate an existing scholarship
5 selection agency or panel to select the recipients of
6 Underwood-Smith teacher scholarships who meet the eligibility
7 criteria set forth in subsection (b) of this section. If no such
8 agency or panel exists, the Governor shall appoint a scholarship
9 selection panel for this purpose which shall consist of seven
10 persons representative of public school administrators, teachers,
11 including preschool teachers, and parents.

12 (b) Eligibility for an Underwood-Smith teacher scholarship
13 award shall be limited to West Virginia resident students who:

14 (1) Have graduated or are graduating from high school and rank
15 in the top ten percent of their graduating class or the top ten
16 percent statewide of those West Virginia students taking the
17 American College Test;

18 (2) Have a cumulative grade point average of at least three
19 and twenty-five one hundredths on a possible scale of four after
20 successfully completing two years of course work at an approved
21 institution of higher education;

22 (3) Are public school aides or paraprofessionals as defined in
23 section eight, article four, chapter eighteen-a of this code and
24 who have a cumulative grade point average of at least three and

1 twenty-five one hundredths on a possible scale of four after
2 successfully completing two years of course work at an approved
3 institution of higher education; or

4 (4) Are graduate students at the master's degree level who
5 have graduated or are graduating in the top ten percent of their
6 college graduating class.

7 (c) In accordance with the rules of the commission, the vice
8 chancellor for administration shall develop criteria and procedures
9 for the selection of scholarship recipients that reflect the
10 purposes of this article and the areas in which particular efforts
11 will be made in the selection of scholars as set forth in section
12 one of this article and which also may include, but not be limited
13 to, the grade point average of the applicant, involvement in
14 extracurricular activities, financial need, current academic
15 standing and an expression of interest in teaching as expressed in
16 an essay written by the applicant. Such criteria and procedures
17 further may require the applicant to furnish letters of
18 recommendation from teachers and others. It is the intent of the
19 Legislature that academic abilities be the primary criteria for
20 selecting scholarship recipients: *Provided*, That the qualified
21 applicants with the highest academic abilities who intend to pursue
22 teaching careers in areas of critical need and shortage as
23 determined by the State Board of Education shall be given priority.

24 (d) Within the Underwood-Smith teacher scholarship program,

1 the vice chancellor for administration shall establish a separate
2 category of scholarships and loan repayment assistance grants for
3 teaching in high demand teaching fields in accordance with this
4 subsection. The vice chancellor shall reserve at least twenty-five
5 percent of the funds available for new awards each year for
6 priority use for awards within this separate category unless a
7 separate legislative appropriation is made for this purpose. All
8 other provisions of this article apply to this separate category
9 except as modified or extended by the following:

10 (1) The scholarships shall be limited to students, including
11 students enrolled in an alternative preparation program approved by
12 the State Board of Education, who are pursuing certification to
13 teach in high demand teaching fields;

14 (2) The Higher Education Policy Commission and the Board of
15 Education shall each year establish a priority listing of the high
16 demand teaching fields applicable for new scholarship and loan
17 repayment assistance grants awarded during that year's award cycle.
18 The list in effect for a recipient's initial award applies for
19 subsequent renewals and forgiveness or cancellation;

20 (3) For the purposes of this subsection, "loan repayment
21 assistance grant" means the use of funds from this separate
22 category to satisfy up to \$5,000 per year, renewable annually, up
23 to a maximum of \$20,000, of a recipient's outstanding federal
24 Stafford student financial aid obligations. When making an award

1 of a loan repayment assistance grant, the vice chancellor shall
2 ensure that other Stafford loan repayment assistance or
3 cancellation benefits for which the recipient is eligible have been
4 taken first. A loan repayment assistance grant shall be payable to
5 the loan holder;

6 (4) The scholarship agreement and the loan repayment
7 assistance grant agreement shall require the recipient to teach
8 full-time under contract with a county board of education in this
9 state in a high demand teaching field for one year for each
10 scholarship or loan repayment assistance award of up to \$5,000
11 accepted or to meet the other provisions for compliance provided
12 in this article;

13 (5) To qualify for loan repayment assistance, the applicant
14 must submit an application to the vice chancellor including a copy
15 of the applicant's current employment contract, most recent federal
16 Stafford loan statement, official transcript indicating education
17 degree and graduation date, and such other information as the vice
18 chancellor may require. For the purpose of making an initial
19 application by a person who is a prospective graduate at the end of
20 the current academic term and who is being employed for the next
21 school year pending graduation and certification, the application
22 shall include a certification by the employing county board of
23 education on a form approved by the vice chancellor attesting that
24 the applicant is expected to meet the qualifications by the end of

1 the application period. A loan repayment assistance grant award
2 may not be made to any person unless that person submits evidence
3 of qualification prior to the close of the award cycle;

4 (6) Loan repayment assistance grants are restricted to
5 recipients who have begun or will begin qualified teaching duties
6 within one year of graduation from a teacher preparation or
7 alternative preparation program of a regionally accredited
8 institution of higher education in this state; who hold
9 certification to teach in a high demand teaching field established
10 in accordance with this subsection; and who are employed by a
11 county board of education to teach in a high demand teaching field
12 in the public schools of this state;

13 (7) Preference shall be granted for awards of loan repayment
14 assistance grants to applicants who are employed in schools
15 designated as low income schools for the purposes of the federal
16 Stafford and Perkins student loan forgiveness or cancellation
17 programs;

18 (8) West Virginia residency is not required at the time of
19 initial application for a loan repayment assistance grant, but is
20 required as a condition of receipt of an award and for any
21 subsequent renewals. Eligibility for a loan repayment assistance
22 grant may not include criteria except as specified in this
23 subsection;

24 (9) A person may not be a recipient of both an Underwood-Smith

1 scholarship and loan repayment assistance grant.

2 ~~(d)~~ (e) In developing the selection criteria and procedures to
3 be used by the panel, the vice chancellor for administration shall
4 solicit the views of public and private education agencies and
5 institutions and other interested parties. These views: (1) Shall
6 be solicited by means of written and published selection criteria
7 and procedures in final form for implementation; and (2) may be
8 solicited by means of public hearings on the present and projected
9 teacher needs of the state or any other methods the vice chancellor
10 for administration may determine to be appropriate to gather the
11 information.

12 ~~(e)~~ (f) The vice chancellor for administration shall make
13 application forms for Underwood-Smith teacher scholarships
14 available to public and private high schools in the state and in
15 other locations convenient to applicants, parents and others, and
16 shall make an effort to attract students from low-income
17 backgrounds, ethnic or racial minority students, students with
18 disabilities, and women or minority students who show interest in
19 pursuing teaching careers in mathematics and science and who are
20 underrepresented in those fields.

21 (g) The vice chancellor shall provide information on the
22 Underwood-Smith teacher scholarship and loan repayment assistance
23 grant programs to county boards of education to promote the
24 programs as a tool to assist the boards with the recruitment of new

1 teachers, particularly in high demand teaching fields. The
2 information shall include the annual priority listing of high
3 demand teaching fields for which new loan repayment assistance
4 grants will be available during the new award cycle. In addition,
5 the State Superintendent of Schools shall provide the vice
6 chancellor for administration with a listing on March 1 of each
7 year the current job postings by county for all teaching positions.
8 The job postings for which county boards of education are required
9 to continue to post a position until it is filled with a regularly
10 employed teacher pursuant to section three, article two, chapter
11 eighteen-a of this code and any other applicable provisions of law
12 shall be clearly indicated. The vice chancellor shall make the
13 listing available to Underwood-Smith teacher scholarship and loan
14 repayment assistance grant recipients and appropriate job placement
15 offices to facilitate the application of graduated and prospective
16 graduates for employment.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to create a separate category of the Underwood-Smith teacher scholarship program for students pursuing certification in high demand teaching fields and for assistance with federal Stafford student loan repayment for teacher education graduates who teach in high demand teaching fields in the state. The programs include students and graduates in alternative preparation programs. The bill requires the program information to be disseminated to county boards of education for use in assisting recruiting new graduates and for a listing of the job postings to be made available to recipients and appropriate job placement offices.

Strike-throughs indicate existing language that would be removed, and underscoring indicates new language that would be

added.