

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 3111
By: Klick
Human Services
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Studies and reports have shown that there is a shortage of nurses in Texas that is only projected to get worse in decades to come. H.B. 3111 seeks to encourage more Texans to enter the field of nursing by establishing a loan repayment grant program for certain qualifying nurses.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 1 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 3111 amends the Education Code to require the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to establish a program to provide assistance in the repayment of eligible student loans for eligible nurses who apply and qualify for the assistance. The bill authorizes the coordinating board to solicit and accept gifts and grants from any public or private source for the purposes of the loan repayment assistance program. To be eligible to receive the repayment assistance, a person must:

- apply to the coordinating board in the prescribed manner;
- be an advanced practice registered nurse, registered nurse, or licensed vocational nurse; and
- at the time of application for repayment assistance, have been employed full-time for at least one year by, and currently be employed full-time by, a state-licensed convalescent or nursing facility or continuing care facility.

H.B. 3111 sets out provisions relating to the type of loans for which an applicable nurse is eligible to receive repayment assistance and limits the period during which a nurse may receive the assistance to five years. The bill requires the coordinating board, in each state fiscal biennium, to attempt to allocate all funds appropriated to the coordinating board for the purpose of providing the loan repayment assistance and provides for the manner by which the coordinating board delivers that repayment. The bill authorizes such a repayment to be applied to any amount due in connection with the applicable loan.

H.B. 3111 authorizes a nurse to receive loan repayment assistance for each year the nurse establishes eligibility for the assistance in an amount determined by the coordinating board. The bill provides certain limitations on the total amount of the repayment assistance and authorizes the coordinating board to adjust in an equitable manner the distribution amounts that nurses would otherwise receive for a year as necessary to comply with the limitations.

H.B. 3111 requires the coordinating board to:

- adopt rules necessary to administer the loan repayment assistance program;
- distribute to each public institution of higher education or private or independent institution of higher education and to any appropriate state agency and professional association copies of those rules and other pertinent information relating to the bill's provisions; and
- administer the loan repayment assistance program in a manner that maximizes any matching funds available through other sources.

The bill authorizes a reasonable amount, not to exceed three percent, of any money appropriated for purposes of that program to be used to pay the costs of administering the program.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2019.