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## SENATE BILL NO. 737

Offered January 24, 2000

*A BILL to amend and reenact § 22.1-212.2:1 of the Code of Virginia, relating to the eligibility of paraprofessionals for the Virginia Teaching Scholarship Loan Program.*

Patrons—Couric, Byrne, Edwards, Houck, Howell, Lambert, Mims, Puller and Saslaw; Delegates: Amundson, Darner, Dillard, Hull and Jones, J.C.

Referred to Committee on Education and Health

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1. That § 22.1-212.2:1 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 22.1-212.2:1. Virginia Teaching Scholarship Loan Program established; purpose; Diversity in Teaching Initiative Awards and Fund created; Board of Education to administer Program; eligibility requirements for scholarship and awards; collaboration and consultation with State Council of Higher Education; repayment of scholarship required.

A. With such funds as may be appropriated for this purpose *and any gifts, donations, grants, bequests, and other funds that may be received on behalf of the Program by the Board of Education*, there is hereby established the Virginia Teaching Scholarship Loan Program, hereinafter referred to as the "Program," to increase the number of students pursuing careers in teaching; to assist paraprofessionals ~~in the classroom in becoming to complete the undergraduate program to become fully licensed teachers; or to complete an approved program of study designed to increase their level of education or strengthen their classroom skills;~~ and to increase the diversity of persons pursuing careers in teaching. The Program shall consist of ~~three~~ four components: (i) awards to students pursuing teaching degrees in critical teacher shortage ~~areas~~ disciplines; (ii) awards to students committing to teach in high-poverty areas in the Commonwealth; (iii) awards to assist paraprofessionals in ~~becoming completing the undergraduate program to become fully licensed teachers or in enrolling in an approved program of study designed to increase their level of education or strengthen their classroom skills;~~ and ~~(iii)~~ (iv) awards to at-risk and disadvantaged students to pursue teaching careers, pursuant to subsection B.

B. ~~There~~ In addition, there is hereby established, within the Virginia Teaching Scholarship Loan Program, a ~~program~~ component focused solely on increasing diversity among teachers by providing incentives for at-risk and disadvantaged students to pursue careers in teaching, which shall be known as the Diversity in Teaching ~~Program~~ Initiative Awards. The Diversity in Teaching ~~Program~~ Initiative Awards shall provide ~~scholarships~~ awards to at-risk and disadvantaged students enrolled in approved undergraduate teacher education programs and shall be funded with such moneys as may be appropriated for this purpose, and any gifts, donations, grants, bequests, and other funds as may be received on its behalf by the Board of Education and deposited in the ~~Diversity in Teaching~~ Virginia Teaching Scholarship Loan Fund and designated for the Diversity in Teaching Initiative Awards, pursuant to subsection G. The Board shall establish a procedure and criteria, *in consultation with the Office of the Attorney General*, for awarding the Diversity in Teaching ~~scholarships~~ Initiative Awards.

C. The Board of Education shall establish, *in regulation*, criteria for determining; ~~biennially~~, high-poverty areas in the Commonwealth and critical teacher shortage ~~areas~~ for awarding scholarships pursuant to this section, and for defining disciplines. The Board's criteria for determining high-poverty areas shall include, but not be limited to, "high concentrations" of at-risk and disadvantaged students, as defined by the Board, and the concentrations of residents with incomes at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty level. The criteria shall reflect the research findings pertaining to the characteristics of and the effects of socioeconomic deprivation and the lack of cultural enrichment on learning and the educational outcomes of at-risk and disadvantaged students. The criteria shall also include such factors as the needs in teacher endorsement areas and among the several school divisions of the Commonwealth, teacher shortages at the elementary and secondary grade levels, ~~underserved~~ teacher shortages in various geographical regions of the Commonwealth, and teacher shortages among school divisions with high concentrations of at-risk and disadvantaged students.

The Program shall be administered by the Board of Education, which shall promulgate such regulations as may be necessary for the implementation of the Program. The Board shall, before implementing the Program, document in writing the basis for any preferences for at-risk and disadvantaged students in any component of the Program, or in the regulations and policies governing such Program, and, ~~upon making awards~~, that awards and scholarships have been ~~awarded~~ conferred in accordance with constitutional principles. The Board shall consult with the State Council of Higher

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60 Education in the development and implementation of the Program.

61 D. The Program shall consist of *awards and scholarships awarded given annually to undergraduate*  
62 *students in the junior or senior year of college at an accredited public or private four-year institution of*  
63 *higher education in the Commonwealth, who (i) are enrolled full time in an approved teacher education*  
64 *program in a critical teacher shortage area discipline, as may be determined by the Board of Education*  
65 *biennially; (ii) are enrolled full time or part time as paraprofessionals, regardless of their academic*  
66 *classification, to complete the undergraduate program to become fully licensed teachers or in an*  
67 *approved program of study designed to increase their level of education or to enhance their classroom*  
68 *skills; (iii) have committed to teaching in an area with a high concentration of at-risk or disadvantaged*  
69 *students or in a high-poverty area in the Commonwealth; (iv) have and maintain a cumulative grade*  
70 *point average of at least 2.7 on a 4.0 scale or its equivalent; and (iii) (v) are nominated for such*  
71 *scholarship by the institution where they are enrolled.*

72 *At-risk and disadvantaged students enrolled full time in any endorsement area of an approved teacher*  
73 *education program in elementary or middle school who meet the program Program requirements may*  
74 *shall be eligible for such award scholarships or awards.*

75 *Paraprofessionals who are enrolled or accepted as part-time or full-time undergraduate students in an*  
76 *accredited four-year institution of higher education in the Commonwealth, regardless of their academic*  
77 *classification, and who meet Program requirements pertaining to paraprofessionals shall be eligible to*  
78 *compete for and receive such scholarships and awards.*

79 E. Before any teaching scholarship or award is ~~awarded~~ *conferred* in accordance with the provisions  
80 of this section, the scholarship or award recipient shall sign a promissory note under which he agrees (i)  
81 to pursue an approved teacher education program full time at an accredited public or private four-year  
82 institution of higher education in Virginia until his graduation and (ii) *upon graduation, to begin*  
83 *teaching in the public schools of the Commonwealth in a critical teaching shortage discipline or,*  
84 *regardless of teaching discipline, in an area with a high concentration of at-risk or disadvantaged*  
85 *students or in a high-poverty area in the Commonwealth.*

86 An eligible paraprofessional shall also sign a promissory note under which he agrees (i) to pursue an  
87 approved teacher education program *until graduation, or an approved program of study designed to*  
88 *increase his level of education or to enhance his classroom skills, either part time or full time, and (ii)*  
89 *upon graduation from an approved teacher education program, to begin teaching in the public schools*  
90 *of the Commonwealth in a critical teaching shortage discipline or, regardless of teaching discipline, in*  
91 *an area with a high concentration of at-risk or disadvantaged students or in a high-poverty area in the*  
92 *Commonwealth.*

93 Upon graduation, the scholarship or award recipient shall begin teaching in the public schools of the  
94 Commonwealth in the first full academic year after graduating from college and becoming eligible for a  
95 teaching license, and shall thereafter teach continuously in Virginia for the same number of years that he  
96 was the beneficiary of such scholarship or award. Such scholarship or award recipient may fulfill the  
97 teaching obligation by accepting a teaching position in one of the critical teacher shortage areas  
98 *disciplines as determined by the Board of Education; or, regardless of teaching discipline, in a school*  
99 *division with high concentrations of at-risk or disadvantaged students or in a high-poverty area of the*  
100 *Commonwealth, or at grade levels or in a geographical region of the state where teachers who have been*  
101 *at-risk or disadvantaged students are under-represented. The Board of Education may recover the total*  
102 *amount of funds awarded conferred as a scholarship or award, or the appropriate proportion thereof,*  
103 *including any accrued interest, if the scholarship or award recipient fails to honor the teaching*  
104 *obligation.*

105 F. To ensure a more diverse representation among classroom teachers, ~~particularly~~ *especially* at the  
106 *elementary and middle grade level levels, the Program shall consist of no more than five pilot projects,*  
107 *geographically distributed across the Commonwealth, and shall be designed to attract and encourage*  
108 *elementary and secondary school students, particularly at-risk, disadvantaged, and male students, to*  
109 *pursue an approved teacher education program a career in teaching. The Program pilot projects shall be*  
110 *developed in accordance with the provisions of the appropriation act governing the administration of the*  
111 *Better Information Project and the Pre-Collegiate Program under the Virginia Plan for Equal*  
112 *Educational Opportunity in Higher Education. The Program pilot projects may include outreach*  
113 *activities such as student-teacher mentorship programs, linkages between public schools and institutions*  
114 *of higher education, and other programs and activities designed to generate interest in the teaching*  
115 *profession. The Board may provide for shall require the evaluation of each pilot programs program*  
116 *before statewide implementation implementing this component of the Program statewide.*

117 G. There is hereby created in the Department of the Treasury a special nonreverting fund known as  
118 *the Diversity in Teaching Virginia Teaching Scholarship Loan Fund, hereinafter referred to as the*  
119 *"Fund." The Fund shall be established on the books of the Comptroller, and any moneys remaining in*  
120 *the Fund at the end of the biennium shall not revert to the general fund but shall remain in the Fund.*  
121 *The Fund shall consist of such moneys as may be appropriated for the Diversity in Teaching Virginia*

Teaching Scholarship Loan Program and such gifts, donations, grants, bequests, and other funds as may be received on its behalf by the Board of Education. The Fund shall be used solely to fund the Diversity in Teaching Virginia Teaching Scholarship Loan Program for the purpose of increasing diversity in teaching by providing incentives for at-risk students to pursue careers as teachers. Interest earned on such moneys shall remain in the Fund and be credited to it. Moneys in the Fund shall be used solely to award confer scholarships and awards pursuant to the Diversity in Teaching Virginia Teaching Scholarship Loan Program as provided in this section. Disbursements from the Fund for such scholarships and awards shall be made by the State Treasurer on warrants issued by the Comptroller upon written request of the President of the Board of Education. *The State Treasurer shall ensure that any moneys appropriated or provided to the Fund through gifts, donations, grants, and bequests designated for the Diversity in Teaching Initiative Awards shall be accounted for separately and distributed only for awards conferred pursuant to the Diversity in Teaching Initiative Awards.*

H. For the purposes of this section, "at-risk and disadvantaged students" means students having socioeconomic or cultural risk factors which that research indicates may negatively influence academic achievement or educational success.

2. That funds appropriated to support the Virginia Teaching Scholarship Loan Program pursuant to Item 137 B of House Bill 30 (2000) and Item 133 B of Senate Bill 29 (2000) shall be deemed to include funding for the Diversity in Teaching Initiative Awards and Fund.

3. That the Board of Education shall, regardless of the amount of funding or whether any appropriation is increased, promulgate regulations to implement the provisions of this act to be effective within 280 days of its enactment.