

SENATE BILL 730

F2, M4

7lr0304

By: **Senators Jennings and Middleton**

Introduced and read first time: February 3, 2017

Assigned to: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Higher Education – Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program – Farmers**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing the Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program for
4 Farmers; requiring the Office of Student Financial Assistance in the Maryland
5 Higher Education Commission to assist in the repayment of a certain loan owed by
6 certain farmers; requiring the Office, in consultation with the Department of
7 Agriculture, to adopt certain regulations; specifying that funds for the Program shall
8 be as provided in the State budget; requiring a certain annual report to include
9 certain information about the Program; altering the requirements of a certain
10 annual report; defining certain terms; and generally relating to the Maryland Loan
11 Assistance Repayment Program for Farmers.

12 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
13 Article – Education
14 Section 18–1505
15 Annotated Code of Maryland
16 (2014 Replacement Volume and 2016 Supplement)

17 BY adding to
18 Article – Education
19 Section 18–28A–01 through 18–28A–05 to be under the new subtitle “Subtitle 28A.
20 Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program for Farmers”
21 Annotated Code of Maryland
22 (2014 Replacement Volume and 2016 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 18–1505.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



Subject to § 2–1246 of the State Government Article, the Office [of Student Financial Assistance] shall report to the General Assembly by January 1 of each year on the implementation of the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program **AND THE REQUIREMENTS OF § 18–28A–05 OF THIS TITLE.**

SUBTITLE 28A. MARYLAND LOAN ASSISTANCE REPAYMENT PROGRAM FOR FARMERS.

18–28A–01.

(A) IN THIS SUBTITLE THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

(B) “DEPARTMENT” MEANS THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

(C) “HIGHER EDUCATION LOAN” MEANS A LOAN THAT IS OBTAINED FOR TUITION, EDUCATIONAL EXPENSES, OR LIVING EXPENSES FOR UNDERGRADUATE OR GRADUATE STUDY LEADING TO A DEGREE IN AGRICULTURE OR AN AGRICULTURE–RELATED FIELD, INCLUDING FARMING.

(D) “PROGRAM” MEANS THE MARYLAND LOAN ASSISTANCE REPAYMENT PROGRAM FOR FARMERS.

18–28A–02.

(A) THERE IS A MARYLAND LOAN ASSISTANCE REPAYMENT PROGRAM FOR FARMERS IN THE STATE.

(B) THE OFFICE SHALL ASSIST IN THE REPAYMENT OF A HIGHER EDUCATION LOAN OWED BY A FARMER WHO:

(1) HAS RECEIVED AN UNDERGRADUATE OR GRADUATE DEGREE IN AGRICULTURE OR AN AGRICULTURE–RELATED FIELD FROM A PUBLIC OR PRIVATE NONPROFIT INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION LOCATED IN THE STATE;

(2) HAS BEEN A FARMER FOR AT LEAST 5 YEARS BUT NOT MORE THAN 10 YEARS SINCE OBTAINING THE DEGREE;

(3) RECEIVES AN INCOME THAT IS LESS THAN THE MAXIMUM ELIGIBLE TOTAL INCOME LEVELS ESTABLISHED BY THE OFFICE, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT, INCLUDING ANY ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INCOME; AND

(4) SATISFIES ANY OTHER CRITERIA ESTABLISHED BY THE OFFICE.

18-28A-03.

THE OFFICE, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT, SHALL ADOPT
REGULATIONS TO ESTABLISH:

(1) THE MAXIMUM STARTING INCOME FOR ELIGIBILITY IN THE
PROGRAM;

(2) THE MAXIMUM TOTAL INCOME FOR ELIGIBILITY IN THE
PROGRAM, INCLUDING ANY ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INCOME;

(3) THAT PRIORITY FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM SHALL BE
GIVEN TO A FARMER WHO:

(I) GRADUATED FROM AN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER
EDUCATION IN THE STATE IN THE LAST 10 YEARS;

(II) IS EMPLOYED AS A FARMER ON A FULL-TIME BASIS; AND

(III) AS DETERMINED BY THE DEPARTMENT, USES SUSTAINABLE
AGRICULTURAL TECHNIQUES AND DEMONSTRATES ENVIRONMENTAL
STEWARDSHIP;

(4) A LIMIT ON THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY
THE OFFICE IN REPAYING THE HIGHER EDUCATION LOAN OF A FARMER, BASED ON
THE FARMER'S TOTAL INCOME AND OUTSTANDING HIGHER EDUCATION LOAN
BALANCE;

(5) A PROCEDURE AND SCHEDULE FOR THE PAYMENT OF THE
AMOUNT OF LOAN ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE OFFICE TO THE FARMER; AND

(6) AN ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE ELIGIBILITY OF EACH FARMER
PARTICIPATING IN THE PROGRAM.

18-28A-04.

FUNDS FOR THE PROGRAM SHALL BE PROVIDED ON AN ANNUAL BASIS IN THE
STATE BUDGET.

18-28A-05.

1 **AS PART OF THE ANNUAL REPORT REQUIRED UNDER § 18-1505 OF THIS**
2 **TITLE, THE OFFICE SHALL INCLUDE INFORMATION REGARDING IMPLEMENTATION**
3 **OF THE PROGRAM, INCLUDING:**

4 **(1) THE AMOUNT OF MONEY ALLOCATED FOR THE PROGRAM;**

5 **(2) THE NUMBER OF AWARDS MADE AND IN WHAT AMOUNTS; AND**

6 **(3) THE NUMBER OF APPLICANTS DENIED AN AWARD.**

7 **SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July**
8 **1, 2017.**