

1 AN ACT concerning education.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 5. The Higher Education Student Assistance Act is
5 amended by adding Section 65.110 as follows:

6 (110 ILCS 947/65.110 new)

7 Sec. 65.110. School Social Work Shortage Loan Repayment
8 Program.

9 (a) To encourage Illinois students to work, and to
10 continue to work, as a school social worker in public school
11 districts in this State, the Commission shall, each year,
12 receive and consider applications for loan repayment
13 assistance under this Section. This program shall be known as
14 the School Social Work Shortage Loan Repayment Program. The
15 Commission shall administer the program and shall adopt all
16 necessary and proper rules to effectively implement the
17 program.

18 (b) Beginning July 1, 2022, subject to a separate
19 appropriation made for such purposes, the Commission shall
20 award a grant, up to a maximum of \$6,500, to each qualified
21 applicant. The Commission may encourage the recipient of a
22 grant under this Section to use the grant award for repayment
23 of the recipient's educational loan. If an appropriation for

1 this program for a given fiscal year is insufficient to
2 provide grants to all qualified applicants, the Commission
3 shall allocate the appropriation in accordance with this
4 subsection. If funds are insufficient to provide all qualified
5 applicants with a grant as authorized by this Section, the
6 Commission shall allocate the available grant funds for that
7 fiscal year to qualified applicants who submit a complete
8 application on or before a date specified by the Commission,
9 based on the following order of priority:

10 (1) first, to new, qualified applicants who are
11 members of a racial minority as defined in subsection (e);
12 and

13 (2) second, to other new, qualified applicants in
14 accordance with this Section.

15 (c) A person is a qualified applicant under this Section
16 if he or she meets all of the following qualifications:

17 (1) The person is a United States citizen or eligible
18 noncitizen.

19 (2) The person is a resident of this State.

20 (3) The person is a borrower with an outstanding
21 balance due on an educational loan related to obtaining a
22 degree in social work.

23 (4) The person has been employed as a school social
24 worker by a public elementary school or secondary school
25 in this State for at least 12 consecutive months.

26 (5) The person is currently employed as a school

1 social worker by a public elementary school or secondary
2 school in this State.

3 (d) An applicant shall submit an application, in a form
4 determined by the Commission, for grant assistance under this
5 Section to the Commission. An applicant is required to submit,
6 with the application, supporting documentation as the
7 Commission may deem necessary.

8 (e) Racial minorities are underrepresented as school
9 social workers in elementary and secondary schools in
10 Illinois, and the General Assembly finds that it is in the
11 interest of this State to provide them priority consideration
12 for programs that encourage their participation in this field
13 and thereby foster a profession that is more reflective of the
14 diversity of Illinois students and parents they will serve. A
15 more reflective workforce in school social work allows
16 improved outcomes for students and a better utilization of
17 services. Therefore, the Commission shall give priority to
18 those applicants who are members of a racial minority. In this
19 subsection (e), "racial minority" means a person who is a
20 citizen of the United States or a lawful permanent resident
21 alien of the United States and who is:

22 (1) Black (a person having origins in any of the black
23 racial groups in Africa);

24 (2) Hispanic (a person of Spanish or Portuguese
25 culture with origins in Mexico, South or Central America,
26 or the Caribbean Islands, regardless of race);

1 (3) Asian American (a person having origins in any of
2 the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the
3 Indian Subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands); or

4 (4) American Indian or Alaskan Native (a person having
5 origins in any of the original peoples of North America).

6 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect July 1,
7 2022.