

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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C.S.S.B. 446
By: West
Business & Commerce
4/10/2019
Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

S.B. 446 requires public employers to provide written notice regarding the availability of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program to newly hired employees.

The program is a federal financial aid program that forgives the remaining balance of student loans received under the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program after 120 qualifying monthly payments are made under a qualifying repayment plan while working full-time for a government organization or 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Requiring public employers to notify newly hired employees of this federal program will provide an incentive for educated employees to seek out long-term employment with a governmental organization while also helping to address the national epidemic of growing student loan debt.

Excessive student loan debt is one of the greatest challenges that Americans currently face. Americans owe nearly 1.5 trillion dollars in student loan debt, distributed among an estimated 44 million borrowers. (Original Author's/Sponsor's Statement of Intent)

C.S.S.B. 446 amends current law relating to requiring a public employer to give notice to new employees of the ability of certain employees to participate in the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subtitle A, Title 6, Government Code, by adding Chapter 620, as follows:

CHAPTER 620. NOTICE OF PUBLIC SERVICE LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM

Sec. 620.001. DEFINITION. Defines "public employer."

Sec. 620.002. NOTICE OF PUBLIC SERVICE LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM. (a) Requires a public employer, except as provided by Subsection (b) and not later than the 30th day after the date on which an employee begins employment with the employer, to provide written notice to the employee of the ability of eligible employees of the employer to participate in the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program administered by the United States Department of Education. Authorizes a public employer to deliver a written notice under this section to an employee by certain forms of physical and electronic communication commonly used by the employer to communicate with the employees.

(b) Provides that this section does not apply to a public employer if the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program administered by the United State Department of Education is discontinued or funds are not made available for the program.

SECTION 2. (a) Makes application of this Act, except as provided by Subsection (b), prospective.

(b) Requires a public employer to provide the written notice described by Section 620.002, Government Code, as added by this Act, to an employee employed by the employer on the effective date of this Act not later than September 9, 2019.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2019.