OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

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Office of Research and Drafting

Legislative Budget Office

H.B. 924
136th General Assembly

Bill Analysis

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsor: Rep. Williams

S. Ben Fogle, Attorney

SUMMARY

- Creates the Court-appointed Public Defender Loan Repayment Program to be administered by the State Public Defender.
- Provides up to $50,000 of repayment for law school student loans for county court-appointed public defenders in Ohio after ten years of service, or 15 of the last 20 years if not consecutive.
- Creates the Court-appointed Public Defender Loan Repayment Fund in the state treasury.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Court-appointed Public Defender Loan Repayment Program

The bill creates the Court-appointed Public Defender Loan Repayment Program, the purpose of which is to provide student loan repayment for county court-appointed public defenders in Ohio. The State Public Defender administers the Program.[1]

Under the Program, the State Public Defender must repay up to $50,000 of a government or other education loan taken by a person when the following requirements are met:

- The loan was used to pay for expenses incurred while enrolled at an American Bar Association (ABA)-accredited law school in the U.S., or a law school outside the U.S. for which the person received a foreign equivalency evaluation.
- The person is employed as a county court-appointed counsel for indigents in criminal defense cases for at least 1,000 hours a year for ten consecutive years, or for 15 of the

[1] R.C. 120.09(A).

last 20 years if nonconsecutive. This does not include the office of county public defender or joint county public defender, as they are not court appointed.

- The person is not enrolled in any other state or federally funded student loan repayment or debt forgiveness program, including the federal "John R. Justice Prosecutors and Defenders Incentive Act of 2008," or Ohio's Rural Practice Incentive Program.[2]
- As of October 1, 2007, the person has made monthly payments for the full amount due, no later than 15 days after the due date, during the person's employment as a court-appointed public defender.[3]

The State Public Defender must adopt rules under the abbreviated rulemaking procedure to implement the Program, including the application process described below, a method to verify the applicant's information, and a method to receive and review questions regarding the Program from the general public. These rules are not subject to certain procedures related to regulatory restrictions.[4]

Application process

To apply for loan repayment, a person must apply to the State Public Defender on a form prescribed by the State Public Defender. The form must include the person's name, address, phone number, qualifying employer, a summary and verification of the person's educational expenses for which the person seeks repayment, and verification that the person is admitted to practice law in Ohio and is in good standing with the Ohio Supreme Court.[5]

Treasury Fund

The bill creates the Court-appointed Public Defender Loan Repayment Fund in the state treasury. It consists of all money awarded to the state by donation, gift, bequest, or otherwise for the purpose of implementing and administering the Program.[6]

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	05-19-26

ANHB0924IN-136/ar

[2] See 34 United States Code 10671 and R.C. 3333.131, not in the bill.

[3] R.C. 120.09(B) and 120.091(A).

[4] R.C. 120.09(C) and (D). See also R.C. 121.95, not in the bill.

[5] R.C. 120.091(B).

[6] R.C. 120.092.