

Amendment: LE 2

Representative HERBKERSMAN proposes the following amendment:

Section 117 - General Provisions

AMEND

117.65. (GP: ~~Healthcare~~ Critical Employee Recruitment and Retention) ~~The Department of Corrections, Department of Disabilities and Special Needs, Department of Health and Environmental Control, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Mental Health, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, and Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School~~ State agencies are allowed to spend state, federal, and other sources of revenue to provide lump sum bonuses to aid in recruiting and retaining ~~healthcare~~ workers in critical needs ~~healthcare~~ jobs ~~based on objective guidelines established by the Department of Administration~~ which provide services that directly impact the health, safety, and welfare of the public. The employee bonus amount shall be approved by the State Human Resources Director based on State Human Resources guidelines, and shall not exceed \$10,000 per year. Payment of these bonuses is not a part of the employee's base salary and is not earnable compensation for purposes of employee and employer contributions to respective retirement systems. These bonuses shall, however, be considered earnings for determining if an employee who has returned to work after retirement is subject to the earning limitation imposed in either Section 9-1-1790(A)(1) or Section 9-11-(4)(a)(i).

These agencies may also provide paid educational leave for any ~~employees~~ employee in an a FTE position deemed critical by the Department of Administration to attend class while enrolled in ~~healthcare~~ degree programs that are related to the agency's mission. All such leave is at the agency head's discretion.

These agencies may enter into an agreement with ~~Psychiatrists, Psychologists, and Nurses~~ individuals employed in ~~those~~ critical needs positions to repay them for their outstanding student loans associated with completion of a ~~healthcare~~ relevant degree. ~~The employee must be employed in a critical needs area, which would be identified at the agency head's discretion. Critical needs areas could include rural areas, areas with high turnover, or where the agency has experienced recruiting difficulties.~~ Agencies may pay these employees up to twenty percent or \$7,500, whichever is less, of their outstanding student loan each year over a five-year period. Payments will be made directly to the employee at the end of each year of employment. The agency will be responsible for verifying the ~~principle~~ principal balance of the employee's student loan prior to issuing payments.

~~Employees of these agencies working on a practicum or required clinical experience towards completion of a healthcare degree may be allowed to complete these requirements at their state agency or another state agency at the discretion of the agency head. This field placement at another state agency may be considered work time for participating employees.~~

~~These agencies~~ Agencies are also authorized to allow tuition reimbursement from a maximum of ten credit hours per semester; allow probationary employees to participate in tuition programs; and provide

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tuition prepayment instead of tuition reimbursement for employees willing to pursue a degree in a healthcare program. An agency may pay up to fifty percent of an employee's tuition through tuition prepayment. The remaining tuition could be reimbursed to the employee after successful completion of the class.

The Department of Administration shall approve of the designation of critical needs positions applicable to this provision using guidelines that include, but are not limited to: 1) the difficulty recruiting for the positions as reflected by data such as the vacancy rate maintained, the average time to fill, the lack of sufficient qualified applicants, and other objective factors; 2) the difficulty retaining employees in the positions as shown by turnover data; 3) justification by the state agency that the position is critical to the core mission of the agency and directly impacts the health, safety and welfare of the public; and 4) assurances from the state agency that there are sufficient existing funds available to pay for items under this provision.

Healthcare employees in approved critical needs positions working on a practicum or required clinical experience towards completion of a healthcare degree may be allowed to complete these requirements at their state agency or another state agency at the discretion of the agency head. This field placement at another state agency may be considered work time for participating employees.

State agencies must report to the Department of Administration by August 31st of each year any expenditure under this provision. The Department of Administration shall compile a report of the responses and submit them to the Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee and the Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee by October 1st of each year.