

A-Engrossed
House Bill 2639

Ordered by the House February 28
Including House Amendments dated February 28

Sponsored by Representative ROBLAN (Pre-session filed.)

SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure.

Creates Veterinary Loan Repayment Program. Directs Oregon Student Assistance Commission to administer program to repay student loans for veterinarians who agree to work in veterinary resource shortage areas.

Creates Veterinary Loan Repayment Program Fund and continuously appropriates moneys in fund to Oregon Student Assistance Commission.

Becomes operative January 1, 2012.

Declares emergency, effective on passage.

A BILL FOR AN ACT

1
2 Relating to a veterinary loan repayment program; appropriating money; and declaring an emergency.

3 **Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:**

4 **SECTION 1. As used in sections 1 to 3 of this 2011 Act:**

5 (1) **"Qualifying loan" means a loan for expenses incurred at a veterinary college or a**
6 **veterinary department of a university or college that is approved by the Oregon State**
7 **Veterinary Medical Examining Board or accredited by a national accreditation organization.**

8 (2) **"Veterinary resource shortage area" means an area designated by the State**
9 **Veterinarian as having limited access to:**

10 (a) **Veterinary services for large animals; or**

11 (b) **Veterinary services necessary to protect public health.**

12 **SECTION 2. (1) There is created the Veterinary Loan Repayment Program, to be ad-**
13 **ministered by the Oregon Student Assistance Commission pursuant to rules adopted by the**
14 **commission.**

15 (2) **A person is eligible for the program if the person:**

16 (a) **Submits an application to the commission as provided by rule of the commission;**

17 (b)(A) **Is enrolled in the final year of a veterinary medical program at a veterinary college**
18 **or a veterinary department of a university or college that is approved by the Oregon State**
19 **Veterinary Medical Examining Board or accredited by a national accreditation organization;**
20 **or**

21 (B) **Was first licensed as a veterinarian in any jurisdiction not more than three years**
22 **before submitting the application;**

23 (c) **Has at least one qualifying loan;**

24 (d) **Is current on payments of all qualifying loans; and**

25 (e) **Is not enrolled in any other program that offers repayment of loans for expenses in-**

NOTE: Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter [*italic and bracketed*] is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

1 curred at a veterinary college or a veterinary department of a university or college.

2 **SECTION 3.** (1) A veterinarian or prospective veterinarian who wishes to participate in
3 the Veterinary Loan Repayment Program shall execute a veterinary loan repayment agree-
4 ment providing that:

5 (a) In the time period immediately following the person's licensure as a veterinarian un-
6 der ORS chapter 686 or the time period immediately following the execution of the veterinary
7 loan repayment agreement with the commission, whichever occurs later, the veterinarian
8 agrees to practice for at least four years in a veterinary resource shortage area.

9 (b) For up to four years that the veterinarian serves in a veterinary resource shortage
10 area, the commission shall annually pay to the veterinarian \$15,000 or the balance of the
11 veterinarian's qualifying loans, whichever is less.

12 (2) If the veterinarian does not complete the full service obligation set forth in subsection
13 (1) of this section, the commission shall collect 100 percent of any payments made by the
14 commission to the veterinarian under the program. In addition, the commission shall assess
15 a penalty equal to 25 percent of the payments made by the commission to the veterinarian
16 under the program. The commission may not charge interest on the penalty.

17 (3) All moneys received under this section shall be paid into the Veterinary Loan Re-
18 payment Program Fund established under section 4 of this 2011 Act.

19 (4) The commission may waive all or part of any fees or penalties owed to the commission
20 due to hardship that prevents a veterinarian from fulfilling the service obligation set forth
21 in subsection (1) of this section.

22 **SECTION 4.** The Veterinary Loan Repayment Program Fund is established in the State
23 Treasury, separate and distinct from the General Fund. Interest earned by the Veterinary
24 Loan Repayment Program Fund shall be credited to the fund. Moneys in the fund are con-
25 tinuously appropriated to the Oregon Student Assistance Commission for the purposes of
26 carrying out sections 1 to 3 of this 2011 Act.

27 **SECTION 5.** (1) Sections 1 to 3 of this 2011 Act become operative on January 1, 2012.

28 (2) The Oregon Student Assistance Commission may take any action before the operative
29 date specified in subsection (1) of this section that is necessary to enable the commission to
30 exercise, on and after the operative date specified in subsection (1) of this section, all the
31 duties, functions and powers conferred on the commission by sections 1 to 3 of this 2011 Act.

32 **SECTION 6.** This 2011 Act being necessary for the immediate preservation of the public
33 peace, health and safety, an emergency is declared to exist, and this 2011 Act takes effect
34 on its passage.