

Substitute for HOUSE BILL No. 2595

By Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources

2-17

1 AN ACT concerning attorneys at law; relating to the practice of law in
2 rural Kansas; enacting the attorney training program for rural Kansas
3 act; providing stipends to law students who meet certain requirements
4 and agree to practice law in rural areas; providing loan forgiveness to
5 lawyers who meet certain requirements and practice law in rural areas;
6 establishing the attorney training program for rural Kansas fund.
7

8 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Kansas:*

9 Section 1. (a) (1) Section 1 et seq., and amendments thereto, shall be
10 known and may be cited as the attorney training program for rural Kansas
11 act.

12 (2) The provisions of this act shall expire and have no effect on and
13 after July 1, 2031.

14 (b) The purpose of the act is to provide encouragement, opportunities
15 and incentives for licensed attorneys or individuals who are pursuing a law
16 degree at Washburn university or the university of Kansas to practice law
17 in rural Kansas communities.

18 (c) As used in this act:

19 (1) "Advisory committee" means the attorney training program for
20 rural Kansas advisory committee established in section 2, and amendments
21 thereto.

22 (2) "Law school" means the Washburn university school of law and
23 the university of Kansas school of law.

24 (3) "Law student" means an individual enrolled in and attending law
25 school at Washburn university or the university of Kansas.

26 (4) "Practice of law" includes:

27 (A) Representing a client in the practice of law;

28 (B) serving as corporate counsel or an attorney with a local, state or
29 federal government body;

30 (C) teaching at a law school approved by the American bar
31 association; and

32 (D) serving as a judge or judicial law clerk in a federal, state or local
33 court if the position requires a license to practice law.

34 (5) "Program agreement" means an agreement to meet all the
35 obligations provided in section 3, and amendments thereto.

36 (6) "Rural" or "rural community" means any county of this state other

1 than Douglas, Johnson, Sedgwick, Shawnee and Wyandotte counties.

2 Sec. 2. (a) There is hereby established the attorney training program
3 for rural Kansas advisory committee. The advisory committee shall assist
4 in the administration of the law student training and stipend program for
5 rural Kansas established in section 3, and amendments thereto, and the
6 attorney training and loan repayment program for rural Kansas established
7 in section 4, and amendments thereto.

8 (b) The advisory committee shall consist of the following seven
9 members appointed by the chief justice of the Kansas supreme court:

10 (1) Three attorneys licensed in Kansas who each reside in a rural
11 community;

12 (2) two non-attorney members who each reside in a rural community;

13 (3) one representative from the Washburn university school of law;
14 and

15 (4) one representative from the university of Kansas school of law.

16 (c) The chief justice shall appoint the initial members of the advisory
17 committee on or before October 15, 2026.

18 (d) The chief justice shall appoint the chairperson of the advisory
19 committee.

20 (e) Any vacancy on the advisory committee shall be filled in the same
21 manner as the original appointment.

22 (f) (1) The advisory committee may meet at any time and any place
23 upon the call of the chairperson.

24 (2) Members of the advisory committee shall be reimbursed amounts
25 for expenses, mileage and subsistence pursuant to K.S.A. 75-3223(e), and
26 amendments thereto.

27 (g) The office of judicial administration shall provide necessary staff
28 to support the advisory committee.

29 (h) The advisory committee may adopt rules and regulations
30 necessary to implement and administer the law student training and
31 stipend program for rural Kansas and the attorney training and loan
32 repayment program for rural Kansas.

33 Sec. 3. (a) There is hereby established the law student training and
34 stipend program for rural Kansas. The program shall be administered by
35 the advisory committee established in section 2, and amendments thereto,
36 in coordination with:

37 (1) Washburn university for Washburn university law students; and

38 (2) the university of Kansas for university of Kansas law students.

39 (b) Subject to appropriations by the legislature, each law school may
40 enter into program agreements with law students who meet the
41 requirements of this section and any other requirements established by the
42 advisory committee and the applicable law school. Preference shall be
43 given to students who are Kansas residents.

1 (c) Each student entering into a program agreement under this section
2 shall receive a stipend in an amount of not to exceed \$3,000 per school
3 year for not more than three years for tuition, books, supplies and other
4 school expenses incurred by a law student in pursuing a law degree. Upon
5 satisfaction of all obligations under this section and the program
6 agreement, the stipends provided pursuant to this section shall be deemed
7 satisfied and forgiven.

8 (d) The program agreement shall require each law student who
9 participates in the program to:

10 (1) Complete the law degree program at the law school;

11 (2) engage in the full-time practice of law in rural Kansas within 90
12 days after admittance to the Kansas bar for a period of at least 12
13 continuous months for each separate school year that a student receives a
14 stipend under the program, unless such obligation is otherwise satisfied as
15 provided in this section; and

16 (3) upon failure to satisfy the obligation to engage in the full-time
17 practice of law in rural Kansas in accordance with the provisions of this
18 section, repay to such university, within 90 days of such failure, the
19 amount equal to the total amount of the stipend received by such law
20 student less a prorated amount based on any such periods of practice of
21 law in rural Kansas meeting the requirements of this section, plus interest
22 at the prime rate of interest plus 2% from the date that such stipend
23 accrued. Such interest shall be compounded annually.

24 (e) Each law school, in coordination with the advisory committee,
25 may adopt additional provisions, requirements or conditions for
26 participation in this program as deemed practicable and appropriate or
27 necessary for the implementation or administration of the program. Any
28 additional provisions, requirements or conditions shall not be inconsistent
29 with this act or appropriation acts of the legislature.

30 (f) Nothing in this section shall be construed to obligate or require a
31 law school to enter into a program agreement with a law student.

32 (g) (1) An obligation to engage in the practice of law in accordance
33 with this section shall be postponed during any:

34 (A) Period of temporary medical disability during which the
35 individual obligated is unable to practice law due to such disability;

36 (B) period of inability to engage in the practice of law for a reason
37 covered in the family and medical leave act; or

38 (C) other period of postponement agreed to or determined in the
39 program agreement.

40 (2) The obligation to engage in the practice of law required by this
41 section or the program agreement shall be satisfied if:

42 (A) The individual obligated is unable to practice law because of
43 permanent disability; or

1 (B) the individual obligated dies.

2 (h) The dean of university of Kansas school of law and the dean of
3 Washburn university school of law shall annually submit a report about the
4 program to the senate committees on ways and means and judiciary and
5 the house of representatives committees on appropriations, judiciary and
6 higher education budget.

7 Sec. 4. (a) There is hereby established the attorney training and loan
8 repayment program for rural Kansas. The program shall be administered
9 by the office of judicial administration in coordination with the advisory
10 committee established in section 2, and amendments thereto.

11 (b) Subject to appropriations by the legislature, the office of judicial
12 administration, in coordination with the advisory committee, shall develop
13 and maintain a Kansas rural attorney loan repayment program in which the
14 state agrees to pay all or part of the principal, interest and related expenses
15 of the educational loans of each eligible rural attorney selected for
16 participation in the program. The advisory committee shall establish the
17 total amount of annual financial assistance available under the loan
18 repayment program. The amount of loan repayment provided to each
19 eligible attorney under this program shall be determined by the advisory
20 committee and shall not exceed \$20,000 for each year that each such
21 attorney establishes eligibility for assistance. The total amount of
22 repayment assistance made to any eligible rural attorney shall not exceed
23 \$100,000. No eligible rural attorney may receive loan repayment
24 assistance under this program for more than five years.

25 (c) A rural attorney is eligible for loan repayment assistance under the
26 program if the rural attorney:

27 (1) Applies to the advisory committee on a form and in a manner
28 determined by the advisory committee;

29 (2) holds a law degree from an accredited postsecondary educational
30 institution;

31 (3) is licensed to practice law in Kansas and is in good standing at the
32 time of application;

33 (4) has outstanding student loan debt;

34 (5) resides in a rural community; and

35 (6) is engaged in the practice of law in a rural community.

36 (d) The advisory committee, in coordination with the office of
37 judicial administration, may approve applications and provide repayment
38 assistance for the repayment of any student loan for education at a
39 postsecondary educational institution, including, but not limited to, loans
40 for undergraduate education received by the rural attorney through a
41 lender.

42 (e) (1) Loan repayment shall be available to eligible rural attorneys
43 on an annual basis. To receive loan repayment assistance, an eligible rural

1 attorney shall enter into an agreement to practice law in a rural community
2 for a period of at least 12 continuous months for each separate year that
3 such attorney receives loan repayment assistance under the program,
4 unless the loan repayment obligation is otherwise satisfied as provided in
5 this section.

6 (2) Each agreement entered into under this section shall include
7 reasonable penalties for breach of contract. The office of judicial
8 administration shall be responsible for enforcing the contract and
9 collecting any damages or penalties owed.

10 (f) An obligation to engage in the practice of law in accordance with
11 this section shall be postponed during any:

12 (1) Period of temporary medical disability during which the
13 individual obligated is unable to practice law due to such disability;

14 (2) period of inability to engage in the practice of law for a reason
15 covered in the family and medical leave act; or

16 (3) other period of postponement agreed to or determined in the
17 program agreement.

18 (g) An obligation to engage in the practice of law in accordance with
19 this section shall be satisfied if:

20 (1) The obligation to engage in the practice of law required by this
21 section or the program agreement has been completed;

22 (2) the individual obligated is unable to practice law because of
23 permanent disability; or

24 (3) the individual obligated dies.

25 (h) The office of judicial administration shall annually submit a report
26 about the program to the senate committees on ways and means and
27 judiciary and the house of representatives committees on appropriations,
28 judiciary and higher education budget. Such report shall include:

29 (1) The amount of moneys allocated to the attorney training program
30 for rural Kansas fund;

31 (2) the number of eligible rural attorneys who applied for the
32 program;

33 (3) the number of eligible rural attorneys who received loan
34 repayment assistance;

35 (4) the portion of moneys appropriated from the attorney training
36 program for rural Kansas fund reported by use, county, number and
37 categories of clients served in a manner that does not violate attorney-
38 client privilege; and

39 (5) the process for allocating funding.

40 (i) Nothing in this section shall be construed to create a legal
41 entitlement to loan repayment assistance.

42 Sec. 5. There is hereby established in the state treasury the attorney
43 training program for rural Kansas fund. Such fund shall be administered

1 by the judicial administrator. All moneys credited to the attorney training
2 program for rural Kansas fund shall be expended only for student stipends
3 for students who enter into an agreement pursuant to section 3, and
4 amendments thereto, or student loan repayment for licensed attorneys who
5 enter into an agreement pursuant to section 4, and amendments thereto. All
6 expenditures from the attorney training program for rural Kansas fund
7 shall be made in accordance with appropriation acts upon warrants of the
8 director of accounts and reports issued pursuant to vouchers approved by
9 the judicial administrator or the administrator's designee. All moneys
10 received by the office of judicial administration for the law student
11 training and stipend program for rural Kansas and the attorney training and
12 loan repayment program for rural Kansas shall be deposited in the state
13 treasury in accordance with the provisions of K.S.A. 75-4215, and
14 amendments thereto. Upon receipt of each such remittance, the state
15 treasurer shall deposit the entire amount in the state treasury to the credit
16 of the attorney training program for rural Kansas fund.

17 Sec. 6. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its
18 publication in the statute book.