

SENATE BILL 676

By Woodson

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49,
Chapter 4, Part 7, relative to math and science
teacher service scholarships.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 4, Part 7, is amended by adding the following language as a new, appropriately designated section:

§ 49-4-7__.

(a) The Tennessee student assistance corporation shall administer the Tennessee math and science teacher service scholarship program for college students who are seeking licensure to teach mathematics or science in a Tennessee public school system. The service scholarship shall be a loan-scholarship program. To be eligible for the service scholarship program, a student shall:

- (1) Attain a composite ACT score of at least 27 on any single ACT test date;
- (2) Attain an ACT mathematics score of at least 25, if the student intends to teach mathematics;
- (3) Attain an ACT science score of at least 25, if the student intends to teach science;
- (4) Be enrolled as a full-time student at an eligible postsecondary institution as defined in § 49-4-902;
- (5) Be majoring in mathematics or science;

(6) Make application to the Tennessee student assistance corporation for the award of a service scholarship after being accepted in a National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education approved teacher education program; and

(7) Agree to teach mathematics or science in a Tennessee public school system one (1) year for each year of funding from the scholarship.

(b) A service scholarship under this program may be received for a maximum of five (5) years. To retain a service scholarship, a student shall continue to meet the eligibility requirements of subsection (a) and shall meet the retention standards of § 49-4-911 for a Tennessee HOPE scholarship.

(c) The amount of a service scholarship shall be five thousand dollars (\$5,000) per year.

(d) For each year that the service scholarship is received, a recipient shall agree to one (1) year of full-time service in a Tennessee public school teaching mathematics or science. Once begun, such service as a teacher shall be continuous; provided, however, that the Tennessee student assistance corporation shall promulgate rules for interruption of service due to medical conditions or other circumstances beyond the recipient's control. All service scholarships shall be evidenced by notes payable to the corporation, which shall bear interest at an annual rate of interest to be determined by the corporation from and after the completion of the educational program. The notes shall be executed pursuant to the rules and regulations of the corporation. If the recipient does not teach mathematics or science in a Tennessee public school for the time required to retire the loan-scholarship, the recipient shall be required to repay any amount of the loan-scholarship not retired by acceptable service at an annual rate of interest to be determined by the corporation from the date of completion of the educational program. The permanent withdrawal or dismissal of any recipient from an

eligible postsecondary institution or from a teacher education program, or the failure of any recipient to meet any requirement for retention of the service scholarship, shall immediately result in the forfeiture of the recipient's right to retain the service scholarship. Any service scholarship awarded under this section shall be cancelled by the death or the permanent and total disability of the recipient.

(e) When a student is awarded a service scholarship, the student may apply to the Tennessee student assistance corporation for retroactive award of the scholarship for school years prior to admission into an National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education approved teacher education program; provided, however, that retroactive award of the scholarship shall not exceed two (2) years. An award of the service scholarship retroactively is intended, but not required, to be used for pre-payment of outstanding student loans. Receipt of the service scholarship retroactively shall increase the service requirement by one (1) year of service for each year of retroactive receipt of the scholarship.

(f) The Tennessee student assistance corporation may receive contributions from private sources for funding the service scholarship program under conditions prescribed by the corporation, with the understanding that the funds will be used solely for awards under this section and unused funds shall not revert to the general fund, but shall be carried forward for future student awards. The first service scholarships under this section shall be awarded when the amount of money contributed from private sources totals at least three million dollars (\$3,000,000). Funding from the state shall depend upon the availability of funds and funds being appropriated in the general appropriations act for such purpose. Funding provided by the state in the general appropriations act shall not revert to the general fund but shall be carried forward to the next fiscal year for future student awards.

(g) The Tennessee higher education commission shall study and evaluate the success of the service scholarship program. The commission shall examine the distribution of recipients among qualified teacher education programs, the quality and quantity of the applicant pool for the scholarships, the retention of recipients in the program, dropouts' reasons for withdrawing from the program, the number of recipients who complete the service requirement and any other matters that the commission finds relevant to evaluation of the success of the program. The commission shall report on its evaluation of the service scholarship to the education committee of the senate and the education committee of the house of representatives on or before February 1, 2011, and on or before February 1 annually thereafter. Prior to the award of the first service scholarships and in the annual report thereafter, the Tennessee higher education commission shall report on the progress in funding the service scholarships from private sources.

(h) The Tennessee student assistance corporation, in conjunction with the Tennessee higher education commission, is authorized to promulgate rules and regulations for the administration of the service scholarship program. All such rules and regulations shall be promulgated in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act, compiled in title 4, chapter 5.

SECTION 2. The provisions of this act shall not be construed to be an appropriation of funds and no state funds shall be obligated or expended pursuant to this act unless such funds are specifically appropriated by the general appropriations act.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.