

SENATE FILE NO. SF0030

Wyoming's investment in veteran's mental health.

Sponsored by: Joint Transportation, Highways & Military
Affairs Interim Committee

A BILL

for

1 AN ACT relating to education; establishing the Wyoming
2 veteran loan repayment program; specifying eligibility;
3 providing for loan repayment for veterans who provide
4 mental health services within this state to veterans;
5 providing a definition; requiring reporting; providing an
6 appropriation; and providing for an effective date.

7

8 *Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Wyoming:*

9

10 **Section 1.** W.S. 21-16-2001 is created to read:

11

12

ARTICLE 20

13

WYOMING VETERAN LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM

14

15 **21-16-2001. Wyoming veteran loan repayment program;**

16 **eligibility criteria; procedures; reporting.**

1

2 (a) The Wyoming veteran loan repayment program is
3 created to be administered by the University of Wyoming.

4

5 (b) To qualify for a loan under this section, the
6 applicant shall:

7

8 (i) Be a United States citizen or a permanent
9 resident alien who meets the definition of an eligible
10 noncitizen under federal Title IV requirements or
11 requirements of a subsequent similar federal enactment;

12

13 (ii) Be a veteran;

14

15 (iii) Be enrolled in good standing in a course
16 of study leading to a masters degree in social work or
17 counseling or a doctorate degree in psychology at the
18 University of Wyoming.

19

20 (c) Subject to the availability of funds appropriated
21 for this program, loans under this section may be granted
22 to qualified applicants to pay the cost of attendance for
23 the academic programs listed in paragraph (b)(iii) of this
24 section. For purposes of this subsection, "cost of

1 attendance" means the sum cost of tuition, mandatory fees,
2 room and board, books and supplies, travel and personal
3 expenses to attend the University of Wyoming as determined
4 annually by the University of Wyoming.

5

6 (d) Any federal, state or other grants or funding,
7 other than loans received by the applicant for the cost of
8 attendance for a qualifying academic program shall be
9 prioritized by the University of Wyoming and applied before
10 a loan provided under this section. A loan provided under
11 this section shall not exceed the cost of attendance for a
12 qualifying academic program, reduced by the amounts of any
13 federal, state or other grants or funding received by the
14 applicant.

15

16 (e) A recipient of a loan under this section may
17 repay the loan without monetary payment by working not less
18 than twenty-five percent (25%) of his working hours
19 providing mental health services within this state to
20 veterans. To qualify for repayment under this subsection,
21 work shall be performed within the minimum amount of time
22 necessary to repay the loan, plus three (3) years, which
23 shall begin with the calendar month following the month in
24 which the student completed the academic degree program.

1

2 (f) Any recipient of a loan under this section who
3 fails:

4

5 (i) To complete the academic program for which
6 the loan was provided shall commence monetary repayment of
7 the loan not later than forty-five (45) days after the
8 recipient leaves the academic program;

9

10 (ii) To obtain employment that provides mental
11 health services within this state to veterans within two
12 hundred forty (240) days after successfully completing the
13 academic program, shall commence monetary repayment of the
14 loan within two hundred eighty-five (285) days after
15 completion of the academic program.

16

17 (g) Loan repayment options under this section may be
18 deferred for a period not more than five (5) years while a
19 loan recipient is serving on full-time active duty in the
20 armed forces as defined by W.S. 8-1-102(a)(xxi), the army
21 national guard or the air national guard.

22

23 (h) The University of Wyoming shall have the powers
24 and duties to implement this section and shall establish

1 terms and conditions of loans issued under this section,
2 including:

3

4 (i) Interest rates and loan terms;

5

6 (ii) The form and process for loan application,
7 review and award;

8

9 (iii) Criteria under which students may be
10 relieved from having to repay loans and interest thereon,
11 in whole or in part, where the requirement to repay would
12 cause undue hardship;

13

14 (iv) Criteria for determining the cost of
15 attendance as used in establishing the loan amount for the
16 academic programs listed in paragraph (b)(iii) of this
17 section, based upon each semester or summer school session
18 of full or part-time program attendance.

19

20 (j) Funding of the loan program established under
21 this section shall be by appropriation of the legislature.

22

23 (k) Repayment of loans and interest thereon shall be
24 credited to the general fund.

1

2 (m) The University of Wyoming shall annually review
3 the loan program established under this section and report
4 to the governor and the legislature in accordance with W.S.
5 9-2-1014 regarding program results, funds received and
6 loans issued during the preceding academic year, together
7 with the status of all outstanding loan commitments and
8 repayments under the program.

9

10 (n) This program created by this section shall expire
11 effective June 30, 2035.

12

13 (o) As used in this section "veteran" means any
14 person who served in the United States armed forces as
15 defined by W.S. 8-1-102(a)(xxi), the army national guard or
16 air national guard and who was discharged or released under
17 conditions other than dishonorable.

18

19 **Section 2.** There is appropriated two hundred fifty
20 thousand dollars (\$250,000.00) from the general fund to the
21 University of Wyoming for purposes of the Wyoming veteran
22 loan repayment program established under W.S. 21-16-2001,
23 as created by section 1 of this act. This appropriation
24 shall be for the period beginning with the effective date

1 of this act and ending June 30, 2026. This appropriation
2 shall not be transferred or expended for any other purpose
3 and any unexpended, unobligated funds remaining from this
4 appropriation shall revert as provided by law on June 30,
5 2026. It is the intent of the legislature that this
6 appropriation be included and doubled in the standard
7 budget of the University of Wyoming for the immediately
8 succeeding fiscal biennium but not be included in any
9 subsequent fiscal biennium.

10

11 **Section 3.** This act is effective immediately upon
12 completion of all acts necessary for a bill to become law
13 as provided by Article 4, Section 8 of the Wyoming
14 Constitution.

15

16

(END)