

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4345

To amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to amend the public service loan forgiveness program.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 26, 2022

Mr. WHITEHOUSE (for himself and Mr. MERKLEY) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to amend the public service loan forgiveness program.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Simplifying and
5 Strengthening Public Service Loan Forgiveness Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. PUBLIC SERVICE LOAN FORGIVENESS REFORM.**

7 (a) REDUCING PAYMENTS.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—Section 455(m)(1) of the
9 Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
10 1087e(m)(1)) is amended—

1 (A) in subparagraph (A), by striking
 2 “120” and inserting “60”; and

3 (B) in subparagraph (B)(ii), by striking
 4 “120” and inserting “60”.

5 (2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made
 6 by paragraph (1) shall apply with respect to any eli-
 7 gible Federal Direct Loan which is in repayment
 8 status on or after the date of enactment of this Act.

9 (b) MAKING WAIVERS PERMANENT.—Section
 10 455(m) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
 11 1087e(m)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

12 “(5) COUNTING PRIOR PAYMENTS; SIMPLIFYING
 13 PROGRAM.—Notwithstanding paragraph (1), in car-
 14 rying out this section, the Secretary shall comply
 15 with the following:

16 “(A) The Secretary shall consider as a
 17 monthly payment under this subsection, any
 18 monthly payment made while the borrower was
 19 employed in a public service job on a loan
 20 made, insured, or guaranteed under this title
 21 before, on, or after the date of enactment of
 22 this paragraph pursuant to any repayment plan
 23 authorized under this Act.

24 “(B) The Secretary shall consider as a
 25 monthly payment under this subsection, a pay-

1 ment described in subparagraph (A) that was
2 late or was for less than the full amount of the
3 monthly payment.

4 “(C) The Secretary shall count as a
5 monthly payment under this subsection, a
6 month for which a borrower is serving on active
7 duty (as described in section 101(d)(1) of title
8 10, United States Code) or serving in the Peace
9 Corps, even if the borrower’s loan was in
10 deferment or forbearance and not in active re-
11 payment.

12 “(D) The Secretary shall allow a borrower
13 of a Federal PLUS Loan, made on behalf of a
14 dependent student, under section 428B who is
15 employed in a public service job to consolidate
16 such loan into a Federal Direct Consolidation
17 Loan in order to receive loan cancellation pur-
18 suant to this subsection.

19 “(E) The Secretary shall allow the bor-
20 rowers of a Joint Consolidation Loan or a Joint
21 Direct Consolidation Loan who are employed in
22 a public service job to consolidate such loan into
23 a Federal Direct Consolidation Loan in order to

- 1 receive loan cancellation pursuant to this sub-
- 2 section.”.

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