



Student Loan Assistance Legislation Passed

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After years of debate and negotiating, the Congress and the President recently agreed to adopt a law to encourage individuals to enter and continue employment as prosecutors, public defenders, and civil legal aid attorneys.

When the massive Higher Education Opportunity Act became Public Law 110315 (122 Stat/3078) on 8/14/08, it contained two important subparts: the "John R. Justice Prosecutors and Defenders Incentive Act of 2008" and the "Loan Repayment for Civil Legal Assistance Attorneys."

CCJ [Conference of Chief Justices] and COSCA [Conference of State Court Administrators] have long supported creating loan repayment assistance to qualified law school graduates who enter into a contract to perform as fulltime criminal or juvenile delinquency prosecutors or defenders or civil legal aid attorneys for at least 3 years. The maximum available loan assistance for criminal justice or juvenile delinquency attorneys (administered by the U.S. Department of Justice) could not exceed \$10,000 per year or an aggregate of \$60,000 per borrower. For devoted civil legal aid attorneys (administered by the Secretary of Education), the assistance could not exceed \$6,000 per year or an aggregate of \$40,000 per borrower.

Public Law 110315 requires the Comptroller General to conduct a study of, and report to Congress on, the impact that law school accreditation requirements and other factors have on student access to law school including the impact on racial and ethnic minorities. As with any new federal program authorization, implementation of these provisions awaits a future appropriation of dollars by Congress.

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