

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORT

HB 77

2025 Regular Session

Turner

June 12, 2025

To the Honorable Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives and the Honorable President and Members of the Senate.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

We, the conferees appointed to confer over the disagreement between the two houses concerning House Bill No. 77 by Representative Turner, recommend the following concerning the Re-Reengrossed bill:

1. That the set of Senate Committee Amendments by the Senate Committee on Education (#2463) be rejected.
2. That Senate Committee Amendment Nos. 1, 3, and 7 through 10 by the Senate Committee on Finance (#2841) be adopted.
3. That Senate Committee Amendment Nos. 2, 4, 5, and 6 by the Senate Committee on Finance (#2841) be rejected.
4. That the following amendments to the Re-Reengrossed bill be adopted:

AMENDMENT NO. 1

On page 1, delete lines 2 through 5 and insert the following:

"To amend and reenact R.S. 17:5002(A), (E)(1) and (3), and (G), 5024(B)(1), 5025(introductory paragraph), 5029(B)(3)(b)(ii) and (iii) and (D)(1)(introductory paragraph), 5041(introductory paragraph), (1)(c), and (4), and 5043(1) and to enact R.S. 17:5002(I) and 5024(A)(1)(e), relative to the"

AMENDMENT NO. 2

On page 1, delete line 8 and on line 9, delete "TOPS-Tech award based on the attainment of certain early college credits;"

AMENDMENT NO. 3

On page 1, line 10, after "eligibility" delete the remainder of the line and delete lines 11 through 14 and insert a semicolon ";" and "to provide for applicability;"

AMENDMENT NO. 4

On page 1, delete lines 17 and 18 and on page 2, delete lines 1 and 2 and insert the following:

"Section 1. R.S. 17:5002(A), (E)(1) and (3), and (G), 5024(B)(1), 5025(introductory paragraph), 5029(B)(3)(b)(ii) and (iii) and (D)(1)(introductory paragraph), 5041(introductory paragraph), (1)(c), and (4), and 5043(1) are hereby amended and reenacted and R.S. 17:5002(I) and 5024(A)(1)(e) are hereby enacted to read as follows:"

AMENDMENT NO. 5

On page 4, at the beginning of line 23, change "(2)" to "(3)"

AMENDMENT NO. 6

On page 7, delete line 9 and insert the following:

"(a) For an Opportunity Award, a composite score on the 1990 version of the ACT which is at least equal to or higher than the state's average composite score, truncated to a whole number, reported for the prior year but never less than twenty or an equivalent concordant value on an enhanced or revised version of such test, ~~or on the SAT,~~ or the Classic Learning Test.

(b) For a Performance Award, a composite score on the 1990 version of the ACT of twenty-three or higher or an equivalent concordant value on any enhanced or revised version of such test, ~~or on the SAT,~~ or the Classic Learning Test.

(c) For an Honors Award, a score of twenty-seven or higher on the 1990 version of the ACT or an equivalent concordant value on any enhanced or revised version of such test, ~~or on the SAT,~~ or the Classic Learning Test.

(d) For a TOPS-Tech Award, a composite score on the specified ACT of seventeen or higher or an equivalent concordant value on any enhanced or revised version of such test, ~~or on the SAT,~~ or the Classic Learning Test. The student may, as an alternative requirement, have attained a silver level score on the assessments of the ACT WorkKeys system."

AMENDMENT NO. 7

On page 7, delete lines 12 through 19 and insert "version of such test, the SAT, or the Classic Learning Test."

AMENDMENT NO. 8

On page 11, line 14, after "Award" delete the remainder of the line and delete line 15 and insert the following: "and qualification for a program award based on scores attained on the Classic Learning Test, both as provided in Section 1 of this Act, shall apply to students graduating from high school during or after the 2024-2025 school year."

AMENDMENT NO. 9

On page 11, after line 20, insert the following:

"Section 3. If House Bill No. 378 of this 2025 Regular Session of the Legislature becomes law, the provisions of R.S. 17:5029(B)(3)(b)(ii) and (iii) as amended and reenacted in the Act that originated as House Bill No. 378 of this 2025 Regular Session of the Legislature shall supersede and control regardless of the order of passage, and the provisions of R.S. 17:5029(B)(3)(b)(ii) and (iii) as amended and reenacted in Section 1 of this Act shall not become law."

Respectfully submitted,

Representative Christopher Turner

Senator Rick Edmonds

Representative Laurie Schlegel

Senator Sam L. Jenkins, Jr.

Representative Ryan Bourriaque

Senator Glen Womack

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORT DIGEST

HB 77

2025 Regular Session

Turner

Keyword and oneliner of the instrument as it left the House

TOPS: Adds the Excellence award level for students who score 31 or higher on the ACT, allows award qualification based on the Classic Learning Test, revises eligibility requirements for TOPS-Tech, and allows application of unused award amounts to medical or dental school

Report adopts Senate amendments to:

1. Remove authority of certain students to apply unused award amounts to medical or dental school and the requirement for repayment unless certain conditions are met.
2. Remove qualification for a TOPS-Tech award based on the attainment of certain early college credits.
3. Add Excellence Award eligibility for students attending institutions that are members of the La. Assoc. of Independent Colleges and Universities (LAICU).

Report rejects Senate amendments which would have:

1. Increased Opportunity Award amount for students attending certain institutions.

Report amends the bill to:

1. Provide that proposed law relative to qualification for an Excellence Award shall apply to students graduating from high school during or after the 2024-2025 school year instead of those enrolling in college as first-time freshmen during the 2025-2026 award year.
2. Broaden application of proposed law relative to qualification for an award based on scores attained on the Classic Learning Test to all students, not just graduates of approved nonpublic high schools and approved home study programs, and specify that proposed law applies to students graduating from high school during or after the 2024-2025 school year.
3. Provide that certain provisions of House Bill No. 378 of this 2025 Regular Session of the Legislature relative to home study students supercede the corresponding provisions of proposed law.

Digest of the bill as proposed by the Conference Committee**TOPS award levels**

Present law provides for the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS), a merit scholarship program. Provides for four award levels based on high school academic criteria, including completion of a specific core curriculum, a minimum GPA on that core curriculum, and a minimum ACT score: TOPS-Tech, Opportunity, Performance, and Honors, which is the highest award level for students who score a 27 or higher on the ACT. Proposed law creates Excellence, a new award level, for students who score 31 or higher on the ACT and enroll in a public college or university or an institution that is a member of the La. Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (LAICU). Provides that qualification for an Excellence Award applies to students graduating from high school during or after the 2024-2025 school year.

Award amounts

Present law ties the calculation of award amounts to the amount of tuition charged at a given institution during the 2016-2017 academic year. Proposed law retains present law except provides that for the Excellence award, the award amount is \$12,000 or the amount of tuition and mandatory fees, whichever is less, at a public institution and \$8,500 or the amount of tuition and mandatory fees, whichever is less, at a LAICU institution.

Classic Learning Test

Present law sets a minimum ACT score for each award level and allows qualification upon attainment of an equivalent concordant score on the SAT. Proposed law also allows this upon the attainment of an equivalent concordant score on the Classic Learning Test for students graduating from high school during or after the 2024-2025 school year.

National Guard stipends

Present law provides that students who qualify for both TOPS and a National Guard tuition exemption as provided in present law receive the latter tuition exemption but also receive a stipend based on the TOPS award level for which they qualify. Proposed law adds a higher stipend for these students who qualify for an Excellence award.

(Amends R.S. 17:5002(A), (E)(1) and (3), and (G), 5024(B)(1), 5025(intro. para.), 5029(B)(3)(b)(ii) and (iii) and (D)(1)(intro. para.), 5041(intro. para.), (1)(c), and (4), and 5043(1); Adds R.S. 17:5002(I) and 5024(A)(1)(e))