
DIGEST

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SB 95 Engrossed

2017 Regular Session

Morrish

Present law authorizes a rebate for donations made to a school tuition organization (STO) by a taxpayer who files a Louisiana income tax return. The donation must be used by the STO to provide scholarships to qualified students to attend a qualified school. The amount of the rebate is equal to the actual amount of the taxpayer's donation used by an STO to fund a scholarship, exclusive of administrative costs.

Proposed law replaces the rebate with a nonrefundable tax credit that is equal to the actual amount of the taxpayer's donation used by an STO to fund a scholarship, exclusive of administrative costs for all donations made after December 31, 2017. Proposed law also specifies that in order to qualify for the credit, the taxpayer must be required to file a Louisiana income tax return.

Proposed law provides the credit may be used in addition to any federal tax credit or deduction earned for the same donation, but prohibits the taxpayer from receiving any other state tax credit, exemption, exclusion, deduction or any other benefit for which the taxpayer has received a credit for the donation.

Proposed law provides a three-year carryforward for credits that cannot be used in the year originally earned.

Present law provides that the rebate may be paid only after the conclusion of the school year and after satisfaction of certain requirements. Proposed law changes present law by providing that the credit shall be earned at the time the donation is made.

Present law requires that an STO carryforward all funds in accordance with the duration of time indicated by the donor. Further, at the end of a fiscal year, a donor may request and receive a refund of any unused portion of his donation.

Proposed law repeals present law.

Present law defines an "STO". Proposed law retains present law.

Present law defines a "qualified school" and permits the Department of Education to prohibit a school from participating in the rebate if the school does not conduct criminal background checks on its employees and exclude from employment any person not permitted by state law to work in a nonpublic school.

Proposed law requires the Department of Education to bar a school that does not conduct such criminal background checks from participants in the program and require a school to exclude such persons prohibited from working in a nonpublic school from employment.

Present law requires the STO to provide a public report to the Department of Education regarding all scholarships awarded in the previous fiscal year which contains information regarding donations received, scholarships awarded in the previous fiscal year, and the actual tuition and fee amounts for attendance at each qualified school by Jan. 1st of each year.

Proposed law provides that failure of the STO to report accurately and timely to the Department of Education shall result in the STO being barred from participating in the credit program for the current and upcoming academic years but authorizes the Department of Education to grant an extension of up to 30 days for good cause but for an STO to submit the information.

Proposed law requires an STO to annually pay out or reserve for scholarships at least 75% of all donated monies. Reserved monies shall be designated for specific students who have been awarded a scholarship for the next school year or multiple school years. An STO is required to make an accounting on July 1st of each year with respect to all monies received as donations during the previous calendar year. Any donated monies retained by an STO as of July 1st that exceed 25% of all monies donated in all prior calendar years shall be remitted to the Department of Education for deposit into the state general fund.

Present law requires the Department of Education to ensure the public is aware of the scholarships, with an emphasis of parents in public schools with a letter grade "D" or "F". Further require the Department of Education to provide requirements for STOs to adequately advertise the availability of scholarships to the public.

Proposed law replaces the requirement that the STO advertise to the public with a requirement that the STO shall notify the public but otherwise retains present law.

Effective upon signature of the governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Amends R.S. 47:6301(A)(1), (2)(intro. para.), and (3), (B)(1)(a) and (c)(vii) and (ix) and (2)(a)(i), (C)(1)(d) and (e) and (2); Adds R.S. 47:6301(B)(1)(c)(xii); Repeals R.S. 47:6301(A)(2)(a), (b), and (c) and (D))

Summary of Amendments Adopted by Senate

Committee Amendments Proposed by Senate Committee on Revenue and Fiscal Affairs to the original bill

1. Changes amount of credit to actual amount of the taxpayer's donation used by an STO to fund a scholarship.
2. Removes \$50,000 cap.
3. Retains priority for students that participated in the Student Scholarships for Educational Excellence Program.
4. Authorizes the Department of Education to grant an extension of up to 30 days for good cause to an STO to meet its January reporting requirement.

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Ways and Means to the engrossed bill:

1. Change the timing of when the credit is earned from after satisfaction of certain specific requirements to when the donation is made.
2. Remove authority for a donor to request and receive a refund of the unused balance of their donation at the end of the fiscal year.
3. Add a requirement for an STO to reserve at least 75% of all monies donated for scholarships to be designated for specific students.
4. Add a requirement that any donated monies retained by an STO at the end of a fiscal year that are in excess of 25% of the total of all monies available from donations from all prior calendar years to be remitted to the Dept. of Education for deposit into the state general fund.