

2020 Regular Session

SENATE BILL NO. 318

BY SENATOR CATHEY

TOPS. Provides for TOPS-Tech award eligibility for certain military veterans. (gov sig)

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AN ACT

To enact R.S. 17:5029(E), relative to the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students; to provide for eligibility for certain military veterans to receive a TOPS-Tech Award; to provide relative to eligibility requirements; to require repayment of award amounts under certain circumstances; and to provide for related matters.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

Section 1. R.S. 17:5029(E) is hereby enacted to read as follows:

§5029. Alternative initial eligibility requirements

* * *

E.(1) Notwithstanding the initial eligibility requirements established by this Chapter, effective for the 2020-2021 academic year and thereafter, an individual who has been honorably discharged from a branch of the United States Armed Forces shall be eligible to receive a TOPS-Tech Award, provided he meets all of the following requirements:

- (a) Had at least three years of military service prior to discharge.**
- (b) Is a citizen of the United States.**
- (c) Established Louisiana residency within one year after discharge from**

1 military service.

2 (d) Earned a 17 or higher score on the ACT or an equivalent concordant
3 value on the SAT, or attained a silver level score or higher on the ACT
4 WorkKeys system of assessments.

5 (e) Enrolls in an eligible college or university within one year after
6 notification of eligibility for the award.

7 (2) An individual who is determined eligible for and receives a
8 TOPS-Tech Award pursuant to this Subsection shall be subject to all other
9 provisions of this Chapter relative to the award and the rules and regulations
10 adopted by the administering agency.

11 (3)(a) An individual who receives a TOPS-Tech Award pursuant to this
12 Subsection shall repay all award amounts paid to a postsecondary education
13 institution on his behalf if he fails to meet the requirements provided in R.S.
14 5042 relative to maintaining eligibility or fails to complete the academic degree
15 or the skill or occupational training he is pursuing within the timeframe
16 provided for his award in R.S. 17:5002(E).

17 (b)The administering agency shall promulgate rules necessary to
18 implement the provisions of this Paragraph. The rules shall include the
19 following:

20 (i) Provision for all available means of collecting amounts owed and
21 interest on unpaid amounts.

22 (ii) Provision for circumstances under which a student shall be excepted
23 from the repayment requirements provided in this Paragraph. Such rules shall
24 provide for the definition, certification requirements, and maximum duration
25 of such circumstances, which shall be limited to the following:

26 (aa) Permanent disability.

27 (bb) Military service.

certification requirements, and maximum duration of these circumstances, which shall be limited to permanent disability and military service.

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

(Adds R.S. 17:5029(E))