

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 3

BY SENATOR CATHEY

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Board of Regents to study the feasibility of making TOPS-Tech and GO Grant awards available to low-income students for use during the summer semester immediately following high school graduation.

WHEREAS, the legislature found and declared that a college education should be available to all qualified students, regardless of their financial means; and

WHEREAS, the legislature found that leveraging access to postsecondary education for students with demonstrated financial need ensures that all qualified students are afforded an opportunity to achieve their full educational potential, increase their overall quality of life, and maximize their contribution to the state's economic development; and

WHEREAS, the legislature created the TOPS-Tech Award, which provides financial assistance to eligible students who enroll full-time in an eligible college or university to pursue an academic undergraduate degree or skill or occupational training; and

WHEREAS, the legislature created the GO Grant program to offer enhanced access to postsecondary educational opportunities for Louisiana students with demonstrated financial need by providing critically needed assistance to help cover the cost of attending postsecondary education institutions in the state; and

WHEREAS, seventy-five percent of Louisiana's public high school graduates are economically disadvantaged; and

WHEREAS, research has shown that many low-income high school seniors who initially plan to go to college fail to enroll in the fall semester due to insufficient financial aid to pay tuition and basic needs; and

WHEREAS, making financial aid available in the summer semester immediately following high school graduation enables low-income students to transition directly into career training programs that prepare them for high-demand jobs; and

WHEREAS, the TOPS-Tech and GO Grant awards currently do not support students in accessing postsecondary education and training during the summer semester immediately following high school graduation; and

WHEREAS, making these financial aid programs available to low-income students sooner could significantly increase their ability to access postsecondary education and training, earn a living wage, and lessen their need for public assistance as adults.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Board of Regents to study the feasibility of making TOPS-Tech and GO Grant awards available to low-income students for use during the summer semester immediately following high school graduation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board provide a written report of its findings and recommendations to the Senate Committee on Education and the House Committee on Education not later than March 1, 2021.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be provided to the chair of the Board of Regents and the commissioner of higher education.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES