

2022 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 499

BY REPRESENTATIVE AMEDEE

FUNDS/FUNDING: Creates a fund for the purpose of funding tuition exemptions and reduction of textbook costs for persons who are age fifty-five or older

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 17:1807(A) and to enact R.S. 17:1807(D) through (F), relative
3 to postsecondary education; to create a fund for the purpose of funding tuition
4 exemptions and reduction in textbook costs for persons age fifty-five and older; to
5 provide that the Board of Regents shall administer the fund; to direct the state
6 treasurer to deposit certain amounts into the fund; and to provide for related matters.

7 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

8 Section 1. R.S. 17:1807(A) is hereby amended and reenacted and R.S. 17:1807(D)
9 through (F) are hereby enacted to read as follows:

10 §1807. Persons over fifty-five; exemption from tuition; fifty percent reduction in
11 cost of textbooks; the Pursuing Rewarding, Innovative, and Meaningful
12 Education (PRIME) Fund

13 A. Any person age fifty-five years or over who registers for one or more
14 courses of instruction at a public college or university in this state and who is a
15 resident of this state shall be exempt from the payment of tuition and other
16 registration fees and shall receive a fifty percent reduction in the cost of textbooks,
17 reference books, manuals, and other aids to instruction which are required by any
18 course in which such student is enrolled when purchased from a public college or
19 university operated bookstore. This exemption shall apply regardless of the manner

1 that instruction is provided in the course, including but not limited to in-person
2 instruction, online instruction, or the combination thereof.

3 * * *

4 D.(1) There is hereby created in the state treasury, as a special fund, the
5 Pursuing Rewarding, Innovative, and Meaningful Education (PRIME) Fund, for the
6 purpose of the reimbursement provided for in this Section. Monies in the fund shall
7 be invested in the same manner as monies in the general fund. Interest earned on
8 investment of monies in the fund shall be credited to the fund. Unexpended and
9 unencumbered monies in the fund at the end of the fiscal year shall remain in the
10 fund.

11 (2) After allocation of money to the Bond Redemption and Security Fund as
12 provided in Article VII, Section 9(B) of the Constitution of Louisiana, the treasurer
13 shall deposit in and credit to the fund all monies appropriated to the fund by the
14 legislature. Money from other sources, such as donations or dedications, may be
15 deposited in and credited to the fund.

16 (3) Monies in the fund shall be appropriated, administered, and used solely
17 as provided in this Section. Disbursements from the fund shall not exceed two
18 hundred dollars per credit hour.

19 E. The fund shall be administered by the Board of Regents, which is
20 authorized to receive the appropriations for the exclusive purpose of the provisions
21 of this Section.

22 F. The fund is in addition to, and separate from, any monies allocated to the
23 institutions under the management and control of a public postsecondary education
24 management board. The availability of the funds shall not in any way substitute,
25 limit, or otherwise affect the allocation of funds otherwise available to those
26 institutions under state or federal laws.

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)]

HB 499 Re-Reengrossed

2022 Regular Session

Amedee

Abstract: Creates a special fund to fund tuition exemptions and reductions in textbook costs for persons age 55 and older.

Present law exempts a person age 55 or older from tuition and fees and grants them a 50% reduction on textbook costs at public postsecondary education institutions. Proposed law applies exemption to all courses, whether in-person or online or a combination thereof.

Present law requires any funds lost to institutions due to present law to be reimbursed by the state. Provides that the tuition exemption and reduction in textbook costs are subject to the appropriation of funds by the legislature for such reimbursement. Proposed law retains present law and creates the Pursuing Rewarding, Innovative, and Meaningful Education (PRIME) Fund ("fund") as a special fund in the state treasury to be administered by the Board of Regents and to fund present law. Proposed law further:

- (1) Limits fund disbursements to a maximum of \$200 per credit hour.
- (2) Provides that after allocation of money to the Bond Redemption and Security Fund as provided in present constitution, the treasurer shall deposit in and credit to the fund all monies appropriated to the fund by the legislature.
- (3) Authorizes money from other sources, such as donations or dedications, to be deposited in and credited to the fund.

(Amends R.S. 17:1807(A); Adds R.S. 17:1807(D)–(F))

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Education to the original bill:

1. Limit disbursements from the fund to \$200 per credit hour.

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Appropriations to the engrossed bill:

1. Specify that the initial deposit into the PRIME Fund occurs on July 1, 2023.
2. Specify that the automatic transfers into the PRIME Fund each year are from the state general fund.

The House Floor Amendments to the reengrossed bill:

1. Specify that present law exemption applies to all courses, whether in-person or online or a combination of the two.
2. Subject treasurer's deposit of state general fund money into the fund to the appropriation of funds by the legislature.