
DIGEST

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Harrison

HB No. 385

Abstract: Revises the TOPS program in three areas: increases required ACT scores for the TOPS Opportunities Award, requires TOPS repayment in certain cases, and caps TOPS awards.

Relative to the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS):

Increases ACT Scores

Proposed law, beginning in 2017-2018, changes the requisite American College Test (ACT) score for the TOPS Opportunity Award by increasing the requisite ACT score from no less than 20 to no less than 22.

TOPS Repayment

Proposed law provides (notwithstanding any provision of present law to the contrary and in addition to any other eligibility requirements provided by present law for a student to initially receive and to continue to receive a program award) that for a student to be eligible to have an award payment during the first two award years, the student, for any particular semester or other applicable time period, shall agree to and be required to repay such award amount upon a determination by the agency that the student, during that particular semester or other applicable time period, failed to meet any of the requirements provided by present law (as may be applicable) relative to making steady academic progress or maintaining full-time standing for continuing in the program. Provides that proposed law provisions are applicable to those students who first qualify for a program award for the 2015-2016 award year and any award year thereafter.

Maximum TOPS Award

Proposed law specifies that beginning with the 2017-2018 award year and continuing through the 2021-2022 award year, the tuition award amount provided to a TOPS award recipient who enrolls in any public college or university in the state shall not exceed an amount determined by the La. Student Financial Assistance Commission (LSFAC) to equal the tuition charged by the public college or university attended or \$1,600 per semester, whichever is less. Proposed law also specifies that for the same period of time, the tuition award amount provided to a TOPS award recipient who enrolls in a regionally accredited independent college or university in the state which is a member of the La. Association of Independent Colleges and Universities shall not exceed an amount determined by LSFAC to equal the weighted average amounts awarded for

students attending public colleges or universities in the state or \$1,600 per semester, whichever is less. Provides that the maximum tuition award amount specified in proposed law is exclusive of any additional amounts awarded to students who qualify to receive a TOPS Performance or Honors Award.

(Amends R.S. 17:3048.1(A)(1)(b)(i); Adds R.S. 17:3048.1(C)(6) and (Y))