

1 WHEREAS, current law provides for the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students
2 (TOPS) as a program of merit scholarships for students attending certain postsecondary
3 education institutions who meet a specific grade point average, ACT score, and core
4 curriculum requirements and certain other qualifications; and

5 WHEREAS, there is a need to create a better alignment between the abilities of
6 college graduates and the needs of business and industry; and

7 WHEREAS, there is some concern that many students are not equipped with the
8 knowledge they need in terms of qualifying for initial TOPS eligibility, maintaining such
9 eligibility throughout college, and pursuing courses of study that will best enable them to
10 have successful careers in Louisiana; and

11 WHEREAS, sustaining a well-educated, highly skilled, and productive workforce
12 is critical to the economic growth of this state; and

13 WHEREAS, every effort must be made to address the current and future workforce
14 needs of the state and to empower TOPS recipients to succeed both in college and in the
15 workforce.

16 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby
17 urge and request the Board of Regents and the State Board of Elementary and Secondary
18 Education (BESE), in collaboration with the Patrick F. Taylor Foundation, the Louisiana
19 Office of Student Financial Assistance, each public postsecondary education management
20 board, the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, the Louisiana
21 Department of Economic Development, the Louisiana Workforce Commission, the
22 Louisiana Association of Business and Industry, Council for a Better Louisiana, the
23 Louisiana School Counselors Association, the Louisiana Association of School
24 Superintendents, the Louisiana Association of Educators, the Louisiana Federation of
25 Teachers, the Associated Professional Educators of Louisiana, the Louisiana School Boards
26 Association, the parent of a high school student selected by the president of BESE, the
27 parent of a college student selected by the chairman of the Board of Regents, and any other
28 person or entity the Board of Regents and BESE deem appropriate, to study certain issues
29 relative to the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS), which shall include but
30 need not be limited to the following:

1 (1) Measures that may be taken in order to align the granting of TOPS awards with
2 the meeting of Louisiana's workforce needs.

3 (2) Facilitating the efforts of guidance counselors with respect to counseling students
4 about TOPS before they enter high school and while they are in high school.

5 (3) Establishing a "Total Louisiana" workforce counseling program in which each
6 high school student receives personalized guidance counseling on how his skills and
7 aptitudes, as indicated by standardized tests and any other evaluation tool, best align with
8 Louisiana employment opportunities, as indicated by the Louisiana Workforce
9 Commission's evaluation of areas of economic growth, and a career plan is developed for
10 the student such that the TOPS scholarship can be invested in an education path that meets
11 the needs of Louisiana's economy and leads to lifelong employment and residency in
12 Louisiana.

13 (4) The cost of TOPS thus far and projected future costs, degrees obtained by TOPS
14 recipients, the number of TOPS recipients who lose their awards, and the number of TOPS
15 recipients who do not graduate.

16 (5) Relative to TOPS-Tech, the feasibility of lowering the minimum ACT score
17 required for initial eligibility and eliminating chemistry courses from the core curriculum
18 required for initial eligibility.

19 (6) Relative to TOPS-Tech, the feasibility of allowing certain individuals who have
20 received a general equivalency diploma to qualify for the award.

21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Regents and BESE shall submit
22 jointly a written report of findings and conclusions, including any recommendations for
23 related legislation, to the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on
24 Education not later than sixty days prior to the beginning of the 2015 Regular Session of the
25 Legislature of Louisiana.

26 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this Resolution be transmitted
27 to the chairman of the Board of Regents, the president of the State Board of Elementary and
28 Secondary Education, the commissioner of higher education, Phyllis M. Taylor, the
29 executive director of the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance, the chairman of
30 each public postsecondary education management board, the president of the Louisiana

1 Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, the secretary of the Louisiana
 2 Department of Economic Development, the executive director of the Louisiana Workforce
 3 Commission, and the respective presidents of the Louisiana Association of Business and
 4 Industry, Council for a Better Louisiana, the Louisiana School Counselors Association, the
 5 Louisiana Association of School Superintendents, the Louisiana Association of Educators,
 6 the Louisiana Federation of Teachers, the Associated Professional Educators of Louisiana,
 7 and the Louisiana School Boards Association.

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)]

Cox

HCR No. 173

Requests that the Bd. of Regents and the State Bd. of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE), in collaboration with the Patrick F. Taylor Foundation, La. Office of Student Financial Assistance, public postsecondary education management boards, La. Assoc. of Independent Colleges and Universities, La. Dept. of Economic Development, La. Workforce Commission, La. Assoc. of Business and Industry, Council for a Better La., La. School Counselors Assoc., La. Assoc. of School Superintendents, La. Assoc. of Educators, La. Federation of Teachers, Associated Professional Educators of La., La. School Boards Assoc., the parent of a high school student selected by the BESE president, the parent of a college student selected by the Bd. of Regents chairman, and any other person or entity the Bd. of Regents and BESE deem appropriate, study certain issues relative to TOPS. Such issues shall include but need not be limited to the following:

- (1) Measures that may be taken in order to align the granting of TOPS awards with the meeting of workforce needs.
- (2) Facilitating the efforts of guidance counselors with respect to counseling students about TOPS before they enter high school and while they are in high school.
- (3) Establishing a "Total Louisiana" workforce counseling program in which each high school student will receive personalized guidance counseling on how his skills and aptitudes best align with La. employment opportunities.
- (4) The cost of TOPS thus far and projected future costs, degrees obtained by TOPS recipients, the number of TOPS recipients who lose their awards, and the number of TOPS recipients who do not graduate.
- (5) Relative to TOPS-Tech, the feasibility of lowering the minimum ACT score and of eliminating chemistry courses from the core curriculum required for initial eligibility.
- (6) Relative to TOPS-Tech, the feasibility of allowing certain individuals who receive a GED to qualify.

Further requests that the Bd. of Regents and BESE submit jointly a written report of findings and conclusions, including any recommendations for related legislation, to the House and Senate education committees not later than 60 days prior to the 2015 R.S.

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Education to the original resolution.

1. Instead of including BESE among the entities with which the Bd. of Regents is requested to collaborate on the study, requests the Bd. of Regents and BESE conduct the study (in collaboration with the others) and submit the report to the legislature jointly.
2. Adds the following to the list of collaborators: La. Assoc. of School Superintendents, La. Assoc. of Educators, La. Federation of Teachers, Associated Professional Educators of La., La. School Boards Assoc., the parent of a high school student selected by the BESE president, and the parent of a college student selected by the Bd. of Regents chairman.

House Floor Amendments to the engrossed bill.

1. Adds the following to the list of collaborators: La. Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, Council for a Better La., and La. School Counselors Assoc.
2. Includes the feasibility of allowing certain individuals who receive a GED to qualify for TOPS-Tech among the issues to be studied.