

2016 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 848

BY REPRESENTATIVE HILFERTY

STUDENT/LOANS-SCHOLARSHIP: Provides relative to institutions at which students may use a Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) award

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 17:5081(B)(1)(introductory paragraph) and (3) and (E)(3), to  
3 enact R.S. 17:5002.1, 5027.1, and 5081.1, and to repeal R.S. 17:5002(B)(3) and  
4 (D)(1)(b) and (2), 5027(D), and 5081(B)(4), relative to the Taylor Opportunity  
5 Program for Students; to eliminate certain cosmetology and proprietary schools as  
6 eligible institutions at which a student may use a program award; to eliminate  
7 courses offered by training providers as those that may be funded by a TOPS-Tech  
8 Early Start Award; to provide relative to applicability; and to provide for related  
9 matters.

10 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

11 Section 1. R.S. 17:5081(B)(1)(introductory paragraph) and (3) and (E)(3) are hereby  
12 amended and reenacted and R.S. 17:5002.1, 5027.1, and 5081.1 are hereby enacted to read  
13 as follows:

14 §5002.1 Awards and amounts; exceptions

15 A. Notwithstanding R.S. 17:5002(B), any student who is eligible for an  
16 Opportunity, Performance, or Honors Award pursuant to this Chapter, who graduates  
17 from high school prior to the 2016-2017 school year, and who has enrolled in a  
18 school that has a valid and current certificate of registration issued by the Louisiana  
19 State Board of Cosmetology in accordance with law and that is accredited by an  
20 accrediting organization recognized by the United States Department of Education

1 or in any proprietary school that has a valid and current license issued by the Board  
2 of Regents in accordance with law and that is accredited by an accrediting  
3 organization recognized by the United States Department of Education, shall be  
4 awarded by the state an amount determined by the administering agency to equal the  
5 weighted average of amounts paid under this Section for students attending public  
6 colleges and universities who are enrolled in the permitted skill or occupational  
7 training, as may be applicable.

8 B. Notwithstanding R.S. 17:5002(D), a student who graduated prior to the  
9 2016-2017 school year, who is eligible for a TOPS-Tech Award pursuant to this  
10 Chapter, and who is enrolled:

11 (1) In an eligible college or university that does not offer an academic  
12 undergraduate degree at the baccalaureate level shall be awarded by the state an  
13 amount determined by the administering agency to equal the tuition charged by the  
14 college or university.

15 (2) In an eligible college or university other than as provided for in  
16 Paragraph (1) of this Subsection shall be awarded by the state an amount determined  
17 by the administering agency to equal the weighted average of amounts paid to  
18 students attending an eligible public college or university that does not offer an  
19 academic undergraduate degree at the baccalaureate level.

20 \* \* \*

21 §5027.1. Postsecondary institution enrollment; exceptions

22 Notwithstanding R.S. 17:5027(B):

23 (1) For a student who graduates from high school during the 2009-2010  
24 school year through 2016-2017 school year, for purposes of the TOPS-Tech Award  
25 as provided by this Chapter, the term "eligible college or university" shall include  
26 any school that has a valid and current certificate of registration issued by the  
27 Louisiana State Board of Cosmetology in accordance with law and that is accredited  
28 by an accrediting organization recognized by the United States Department of  
29 Education and any proprietary school that has a valid and current license issued by

1 the Board of Regents in accordance with law and that is accredited by an accrediting  
2 organization recognized by the United States Department of Education. Such a  
3 school also shall comply with all other applicable provisions of this Chapter and  
4 rules adopted by the administering agency relative to a college or university being  
5 initially eligible and remaining eligible for program purposes.

6 (2) Applicable to students graduating from high school during the 2010-2011  
7 school year through the 2016-2017 school year, a student who is the recipient of an  
8 Opportunity, Performance, or Honors award and who pursues skill or occupational  
9 training as defined by the administering agency, including a vocational or technical  
10 education certificate or diploma program or a nonacademic undergraduate degree,  
11 may use the award at any school that has a valid and current certificate of registration  
12 issued by the Louisiana State Board of Cosmetology in accordance with law and that  
13 is accredited by an accrediting organization recognized by the United States  
14 Department of Education and at any proprietary school that has a valid and current  
15 license issued by the Board of Regents in accordance with law and that is accredited  
16 by an accrediting organization recognized by the United States Department of  
17 Education. Such a school shall comply with all other applicable provisions of this  
18 Chapter and rules adopted by the administering agency relative to a college or  
19 university being initially eligible and remaining eligible for program purposes.

20 \* \* \*

21 §5081. TOPS-Tech Early Start Award; purpose; eligibility; limitations;  
22 administration; implementation; reports

23 \* \* \*

24 B.(1) A TOPS-Tech Early Start Award may be used to fund any technical  
25 or applied course leading to an Industry-Based Certification, a Certificate of Applied  
26 Science, and a Certificate of Technical Sciences offered at a Louisiana public  
27 postsecondary education institution or a nonpublic postsecondary education  
28 institution that is a member of the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges  
29 and Universities ~~or by any Louisiana training provider recognized by the Louisiana~~



1 Board of Elementary and Secondary Education as provided in Paragraph (4) of this  
2 Section when such certification or certificate is approved by the Workforce  
3 Investment Council as meeting the following requirements:

4 (a) Is identified by the Occupation Forecasting Conference as a credential  
5 for an occupation in top demand in Louisiana.

6 (b) Is recognized by the State Industry-Based Certification Leadership  
7 Council.

8 (2) An eligible recipient may receive a TOPS-Tech Early Start Award for  
9 two semesters during the eleventh grade and two semesters during the twelfth grade,  
10 excluding summer sessions.

11 (3) The administering agency, on behalf of a TOPS-Tech Early Start Award  
12 recipient, shall pay to the Louisiana postsecondary education institution in which the  
13 student is enrolled in an eligible program of studies or a training program provider  
14 an amount of one hundred fifty dollars for each three credit-hour or equivalent time  
15 course taken by the student, not to exceed two such courses per high school semester  
16 for an eleventh-grade student and two such courses per high school semester for a  
17 twelfth-grade student.

18 (4)(a) By January thirty-first annually, the State Board of Elementary and  
19 Secondary Education shall determine which training program providers it approves  
20 for the academic year that begins in the fall of that year. Such requirement shall be  
21 null and void after January 31, 2017.

22 (b) The State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education shall  
23 promulgate rules and regulations in accordance with the Administrative Procedure  
24 Act to implement the provisions of this Paragraph.

25 Section 2. R.S. 17:5002(B)(3) and (D)(1)(b) and (2), 5027(D), and 5081(B)(4) are  
26 hereby repealed in their entirety.

## 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 848 Original

2016 Regular Session

Hilferty

**Abstract:** Provides that a Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) award may no longer be used at cosmetology and proprietary schools and that a TOPS-Tech Early Start Award may no longer be used to fund courses offered by training providers.

### **Taylor Opportunity Program for Students, generally**

Present law provides for the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) as a program of merit scholarships for students attending "eligible colleges and universities" who meet specific grade point average, ACT score, and core curriculum requirements and certain other qualifications. Provides for Opportunity, Performance and Honors Awards (eight semesters) and TOPS-Tech Awards (two years), as well as TOPS-Tech Early Start Awards for certain high school students.

Present law defines an "eligible college or university" generally as a La. college or university that is either (1) public or (2) a member of the La. Assoc. of Independent Colleges and Universities (LAICU). Present law, for students pursuing skill or occupational training, broadens the definition of "eligible college or university" to include certain cosmetology and proprietary schools.

Proposed law, applicable to students graduating from high school during or after the 2016-17 school year, eliminates the option of using a TOPS award at a cosmetology or proprietary school.

Present law also allows a student to use an award at an out-of-state institution that serves primarily deaf and hard-of-hearing students. Proposed law retains present law.

### **TOPS-Tech Early Start Award**

Present law establishes the TOPS-Tech Early Start Award for eligible 11th and 12th grade public school students and authorizes its use to fund any technical or applied course leading to leading to specified certificates offered by the following La. entities:

- (1) Public postsecondary education institutions.
- (2) Nonpublic postsecondary education institutions.
- (3) Training providers.

Proposed law, applicable to students graduating from high school during or after the 2017-18 school year, limits the nonpublic institutions at which this award may be used to fund such courses to LAICU member institutions and eliminates the authority to use this award to fund courses offered by training providers.

(Amends R.S. 17:5081(B)(1)(intro. para.) and (3) and (E)(3); Adds R.S. 17:5002.1, 5027.1, and 5081.1; Repeals R.S. 17:5002(B)(3) and (D)(1)(b) and (2), 5027(D), and 5081(B)(4))