

2016 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 852

BY REPRESENTATIVE HUNTER

STUDENT/LOANS-SCHOLARSHIP: Provides relative to the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS)

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 17:5002(D)(1) and to enact R.S. 17:5004, 5004.1, 5041(6),
3 5041.1, 5042(5), and 5042.1, relative to the Taylor Opportunity Program for
4 Students; to limit the use of program awards to certain programs of study; to provide
5 relative to maintaining eligibility for program awards; to require that program award
6 recipients repay award amounts under certain circumstances; to provide relative to
7 rules; to provide relative to exceptions; to provide relative to applicability; and to
8 provide for related matters.

9 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

10 Section 1. R.S. 17:5002(D)(1) is hereby amended and reenacted and R.S. 17:5004,
11 5004.1, 5041(6), 5041.1, 5042(5), and 5042.1 are hereby enacted to read as follows:

12 §5002. Awards and amounts

13 * * *

14 D.(1) Except as otherwise provided in this Subsection, a student who is
15 eligible for a TOPS-Tech Award pursuant to this Chapter and who is enrolled:

16 (a) In an eligible public college or university that does not offer an academic
17 undergraduate degree at the baccalaureate level in those associate's degree or other
18 shorter-term training and education programs that ~~are aligned to state workforce~~
19 ~~priorities as determined by the Board of Regents and the Louisiana Workforce~~
20 ~~Investment Council~~ would qualify him for employment in a four or five star job, on

1 a statewide basis, as defined by the Louisiana Workforce Commission, shall be
 2 awarded by the state an amount determined by the administering agency to equal the
 3 tuition charged by the college or university. If the ~~Board of Regents and the~~
 4 ~~Louisiana Workforce Investment Council determine~~ Louisiana Workforce
 5 Commission determines that a program job is no longer aligned with those priorities
 6 defines as a four or five star job, an otherwise eligible student who had previously
 7 received an award and enrolled in that program may continue to use the award.

8 (b) In an eligible college or university other than as provided for in
 9 Subparagraph (a) of this Paragraph in those associate's degree or other shorter-term
 10 training education programs that ~~are aligned to state workforce priorities as~~
 11 ~~determined by the Board of Regents and the Louisiana Workforce Investment~~
 12 ~~Council~~ would qualify him for employment in a four or five star job, on a statewide
 13 basis, as defined by the Louisiana Workforce Commission, shall be awarded by the
 14 state an amount determined by the administering agency to equal the weighted
 15 average of amounts paid to students attending an eligible public college or university
 16 that does not offer an academic undergraduate degree at the baccalaureate level. If
 17 the ~~Board of Regents and the Louisiana Workforce Investment Council determine~~
 18 Louisiana Workforce Commission determines that a program job is no longer
 19 ~~aligned with those priorities~~ defines as a four or five star job, an otherwise eligible
 20 student who had previously received an award and enrolled in that program may
 21 continue to use the award.

* * *

23 §5004. Failure to maintain eligibility or timely complete education; repayment;
 24 rules; exceptions

25 A. A student shall repay all award amounts paid to a postsecondary
 26 education institution on his behalf if he fails to meet the requirements provided in
 27 R.S. 17:5041 and 5042 relative to maintaining eligibility or fails to complete the
 28 academic degree or the skill or occupational training he is pursuing within the time
 29 frame provided for his award in R.S. 17:5002(E).

1 B. The administering agency shall promulgate rules necessary to implement
2 the provisions of this Section. Such rules shall include the following:

3 (1) Provision for all available means of collecting amounts owed and interest
4 on unpaid amounts.

5 (2) Provision for circumstances under which a student shall be excepted from
6 the repayment requirements provided in Subsection A of this Section. Such rules
7 shall provide for the definition, certification requirements, and maximum duration
8 of such circumstances, which shall be limited to the following:

9 (a) Permanent disability.

10 (b) Military service.

11 §5004.1. Post-graduation residency; repayment; exceptions

12 The provisions of R.S. 17:5004 shall not be applicable to a student who
13 graduates from high school prior to the 2016-2017 school year.

14 * * *

15 §5041. Maintaining eligibility; Honors, Performance, Opportunity

16 To maintain continued state payment of an amount equal to tuition and other
17 amounts for an Opportunity, Performance, or Honors Award pursuant to this Chapter
18 once enrolled in college a student shall meet all of the following:

19 * * *

20 (6) Be pursuing a degree or skill or occupational training that would qualify
21 him for employment in a four or five star job, on a statewide basis, as defined by the
22 Louisiana Workforce Commission. He shall remain eligible to receive the award if
23 all other requirements pursuant to Section are met and after he enrolls in but before
24 he completes the program that would qualify him for employment in such four or
25 five star job, the job is no longer defined as a four or five star job.

26 §5041.1. Maintaining eligibility; Honors, Performance, Opportunity; exceptions

27 The provisions of R.S. 17:5041(6) shall not apply to student who graduates
28 from high school prior to the 2016-2017 school year.

1 §5042. Maintaining eligibility; TOPS-Tech

2 To maintain continued state payment of an amount equal to tuition pursuant
3 to a TOPS-Tech Award once enrolled in an institution, a student shall meet all of the
4 following:

5 * * *

6 (5) Be pursuing a degree or skill or occupational training that would qualify
7 him for employment in a four or five star job, on a statewide basis, as defined by the
8 Louisiana Workforce Commission. He shall remain eligible to receive the award if
9 all other requirements pursuant to Section are met and after he enrolls in but before
10 he completes the program that would qualify him for employment in such four or
11 five star job, the job is no longer defined as a four or five star job.

12 §5042.1 Maintaining eligibility; TOPS-Tech; exceptions

13 B. The provisions of R.S. 17:5042(5) shall not apply to a student who
14 graduates from high school prior to the 2016-2017 school year.

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 852 Original

2016 Regular Session

Hunter

Abstract: Requires the recipient of TOPS awards to pursue a field of study that will qualify him for employment in certain categories of jobs and to repay awards unless he completes a bachelor's or postgraduate degree and resides in La. for at least one year for each year of award received; adjusts requirements for maintaining eligibility.

Taylor Opportunity Program Award for Students (TOPS), generally

Present law provides for the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) as a program of merit scholarships for students attending certain postsecondary education institutions 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).

Maintaining eligibility

Present law provides academic and other requirements for maintaining eligibility for awards once enrolled in college. Proposed law applicable to students graduating from high school during or after the 2016-2017 school year, adds a requirement that the student be pursuing a degree or skill or occupational training that would qualify him for employment in a four or five star job, on a statewide basis, as defined by the La. Workforce Commission. Further provides that a student shall remain eligible for an award if he otherwise maintains eligibility

and if after the student enrolls in but before he completes the program of study such job is no longer defined as a four or five star job.

TOPS-Tech Award

Present law, applicable to students graduating from high school during or after the 2016-2017 school year, provides that a TOPS-Tech Award shall only be awarded if a student is enrolled in a program aligned to state workforce priorities as determined by the Bd. of Regents and La. Workforce Investment Council. Proposed law, applicable to this same cohort of students, provides that this award only be awarded if a student is enrolled in a program that would qualify him for employment in a four or five star job, on a statewide basis, as defined by the La. Workforce Commission.

Repayment

Proposed law, applicable to students graduating from high school during or after the 2016-2017 school year, requires any student who fails to maintain award eligibility or to complete his academic degree or skill or occupational training within the time frames specified in present law to repay all award amounts paid to a postsecondary education on his behalf. Requires the administering agency (the La. Student Financial Assistance Commission) to promulgate rules necessary to implement proposed law, including provision for the following:

- (1) Collecting amounts owed and interest on unpaid amounts.
- (2) Circumstances under which a student shall be excepted from the proposed law repayment requirements; requires that these rules provide for the definition, certification requirements, and maximum duration of these circumstances, which shall be limited to permanent disability and military service.

(Amends R.S. 17:5002(D)(1); Adds 17:5004, 5004.1, 5041(6), 5041.1, 5042(5), and 5042.1)