

RÉSUMÉ DIGEST

ACT 503 (SB 470)

2016 Regular Session

Morrish

Prior law provided for the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) as a program of merit scholarships for students attending certain postsecondary education institutions who meet specific requirements. Required the legislature annually to appropriate funds sufficient to cover the costs of TOPS awards.

Prior law provided, if the legislature appropriates insufficient money to fund all awards, for reducing the number of students receiving awards pursuant to a procedure adopted by the administering agency; required that the procedure provide for eliminating students based on ACT score and the ability of families to pay tuition.

New law, instead of providing for the elimination, requires the reduction of award amounts on a pro rata basis; also applies this reduction to stipends granted for certain awards. Authorizes public postsecondary education institutions to charge a student the difference between the award amount and tuition amount, unless the student is granted a tuition waiver.

New law provides that a student whose award is reduced pursuant not be required to accept payment of his award or to enroll or maintain continuous enrollment in an eligible college or university during the time period for which there is a funding shortfall and may defer acceptance of his award benefits. Provides that upon the deferment, the student shall:

- (1) Be eligible, upon enrollment or re-enrollment, to receive all applicable award benefits for any remaining semester or semesters, or the equivalent thereof, of his unused eligibility.
- (2) Meet all academic and other eligibility requirements, except as otherwise provided in new law.
- (3) Exhaust all unused award eligibility within five years of his initial reduction unless granted an exception for cause.

New law does not apply to students receiving TOPS-Tech Early Start Awards.

Effective upon signature of governor (June 14, 2016).

(Amends R.S. 17:5065(D))