

2017 Regular Session

SENATE BILL NO. 157

BY SENATOR HEWITT

Prefiled pursuant to Article III, Section 2(A)(4)(b)(i) of the Constitution of Louisiana.

TOPS. Provides relative to TOPS award amounts. (gov sig)

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AN ACT

To amend and reenact R.S. 17:5002(A)(2), (B), (D)(1)(b) and (2)(b), the introductory paragraph of R.S. 17:5041, and the introductory paragraph of R.S. 17:5042, relative to the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students; to provide relative to the amounts of program awards; and to provide for related matters.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

Section 1. R.S. 17:5002(A)(2), (B), (D)(1)(b) and (2)(b), the introductory paragraph of R.S. 17:5041, and the introductory paragraph of R.S. 17:5042 are hereby amended and reenacted to read as follows:

§5002. Awards and amounts

A. * * *

(2) The award amount **shall be** as provided ~~for~~ in Subsection B or D of this Section ~~to a student enrolled in any given institution shall be equal to the award amount paid for a student at that institution during the 2016-2017 academic year~~ unless the legislature, by law, increases the award amount.

B. Any student who is eligible for an Opportunity, Performance, or Honors Award pursuant to this Chapter and who has enrolled:

1 (1) In any public college or university in this state, shall be awarded by the
2 state an amount determined by the administering agency to equal the tuition charged
3 by the public college or university during the 2016-2017 academic year.

4 (2) At any regionally accredited independent college or university in the state
5 which is a member of the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and
6 Universities to pursue an academic undergraduate degree, shall be awarded by the
7 state an amount to be determined by the administering agency to equal the weighted
8 average of ~~amounts paid under this Section to~~ **the tuition amounts charged to**
9 students attending public colleges and universities that offer academic undergraduate
10 degrees at the baccalaureate level during the 2016-2017 academic year.

11 (3) In a school that has a valid and current certificate of registration issued
12 by the Louisiana State Board of Cosmetology in accordance with law and that is
13 accredited by an accrediting organization recognized by the United States
14 Department of Education or in 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, shall be awarded by the state an amount determined by the administering
18 agency to equal the weighted average of ~~amounts paid under this Section for~~ **the**
19 **tuition amounts charged to** students attending public colleges and universities
20 during the 2016-2017 academic year and who are enrolled in the permitted skill or
21 occupational training, as may be applicable.

22 (4) In an out-of-state college or university that is specifically designed to
23 accommodate deaf and hard-of-hearing students under R.S. 17:5027(C), shall be
24 awarded an amount determined by the administering agency to equal the weighted
25 average of amounts paid under this Section for the tuition amounts charged to
26 students attending Louisiana public colleges and universities that offer academic
27 undergraduate degrees during the 2016-2017 academic year.

28 * * *

29 D.(1) Except as otherwise provided in this Subsection, a student who is

1 eligible for a TOPS-Tech Award pursuant to this Chapter and who is enrolled:

2 * * *

3 (b) In an eligible college or university other than as provided for in
4 Subparagraph (a) of this Paragraph in those associate's degree or other shorter-term
5 training education programs that are aligned to state workforce priorities as
6 determined by the Board of Regents and the Louisiana Workforce Investment
7 Council shall be awarded by the state an amount determined by the administering
8 agency to equal the weighted average of ~~amounts paid~~ **the tuition amounts charged**
9 **to** students attending an eligible public college or university that does not offer an
10 academic undergraduate degree at the baccalaureate level during the 2016-2017
11 academic year. If the Board of Regents and the Louisiana Workforce Investment
12 Council determine that a program is no longer aligned with those priorities, an
13 otherwise eligible student who had previously received an award and enrolled in that
14 program may continue to use the award.

15 (2) A student who graduated prior to the 2016-2017 school year, who is
16 eligible for a TOPS-Tech Award pursuant to this Chapter, and who is enrolled:

17 * * *

18 (b) In an eligible college or university other than as provided for in
19 Subparagraph (a) of this Paragraph shall be awarded by the state an amount
20 determined by the administering agency to equal the weighted average of ~~amounts~~
21 **paid the tuition amounts charged** to students attending an eligible public college
22 or university that does not offer an academic undergraduate degree at the
23 baccalaureate level during the 2016-2017 academic year.

24 * * *

25 §5041. Maintaining eligibility; Honors, Performance, Opportunity

26 To maintain continued state payment of ~~an amount equal to tuition and other~~
27 ~~amounts for~~ **any amount pursuant to** an Opportunity, Performance, or Honors
28 Award ~~pursuant to this Chapter~~ once enrolled in college a student shall meet all of
29 the following:

* * *

§5042. Maintaining eligibility; TOPS-Tech

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

* * *

Section 2. This Act shall become effective upon signature by the governor or, if not signed by the governor, upon expiration of the time for bills to become law without signature by the governor, as provided by Article III, Section 18 of the Constitution of Louisiana. If vetoed by the governor and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become effective on the day following such approval.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Jerry J. Guillot.

DIGEST

SB 157 Original

2017 Regular Session

Hewitt

Present law provides for the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS), a program of merit scholarships for students attending certain postsecondary education institutions who meet specific academic criteria and other requirements for initial eligibility.

Present law provides that the award amounts for a TOPS Opportunity, Performance, Honors, or TOPS-Tech award shall be equal to the award amount paid for a student enrolled in a public or nonpublic postsecondary institution during the 2016-2017 academic year.

Present law also provides that:

- (1) A student enrolled in a public college or university shall be awarded an amount equal to the tuition charged by the public college or university during the 2016-2017 academic year.
- (2) A student enrolled in a nonpublic college or university, a school of cosmetology, or an out-of-state college or university specifically designed to accommodate deaf and hard-of-hearing students shall be awarded an amount equal to the weighted award amount paid to students attending a public postsecondary institution during the 2016-2017 academic year.

Proposed law resolves the inconsistent terminology in present law by providing that, unless increased by the legislature:

- (1) The amount of a TOPS award paid to a student enrolled in a public postsecondary institution shall be equal to the tuition amount charged by the public college or university during the 2016-2017 academic year.
- (2) The amount of a TOPS award paid to a student enrolled in an approved nonpublic college or university, a school of cosmetology, or an out-of-state college or

university specifically designed to accommodate deaf and hard-of-hearing students shall be equal to the weighted average of the tuition amounts charged to students attending public colleges and universities during the 2016-2017 academic year.

Present law (R.S. 17:5041 and 5042), with respect to maintaining TOPS eligibility, contains language that is inconsistent with other provisions of present law and which indicates that TOPS award amounts are equal to the current tuition charged, and not the tuition charged during the 2016-2017 academic year.

Proposed law deletes this inconsistent language.

Effective upon signature of the governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Amends R.S. 17:5002(A)(2), (B), (D)(1)(b) and (2)(b), 5041(intro para), and 5042(intro para))