2019 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 96

BY REPRESENTATIVE FALCONER

HIGHER ED/BD REGENTS: Requests that the Board of Regents study and make recommendations relative to student debt relief measures

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 2 To urge and request the Board of Regents, in collaboration with the public postsecondary 3 education management boards, to conduct a study of student debt relief measures, 4 nationally and statewide, and to submit a written report of findings and conclusions, 5 including recommendations for legislation relative to debt as a barrier to 6 reenrollment for those who have completed some postsecondary education, to the 7 House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education not later 8 than thirty days prior to the beginning of the 2020 Regular Session of the 9 Legislature.

WHEREAS, forty-seven percent of working-age Louisianians, more than one million persons, hold a high school diploma or less as their highest level of education, meaning nearly half of the state's working-age population is at risk of not meeting the demands of the twenty-first century workforce; this often results in Louisianians being unemployed or underemployed and in need of new educational opportunities to advance and thrive; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Regents has set a goal of doubling the number of adults in Louisiana with a meaningful, market-ready postsecondary education credential by the year 2030; doubling the number of annual credential recipients represents reaching an educational attainment level of sixty percent and will require Louisiana to move from producing approximately forty thousand credentials in 2019 to eighty-five thousand in 2030; and

WHEREAS, this goal will demand that the Louisiana postsecondary education community and its partners implement new strategies to reach and successfully reengage all potential student populations, with an emphasis on working-age adults; and 1

WHEREAS, student debt is a major barrier to adult student reenrollment and degree 2 completion; many students struggle to afford the growing cost of postsecondary education 3 and are unable to complete their education because of financial challenges; and

4 WHEREAS, an outstanding balance may lead to registration and transcript holds, 5 which can discourage students from remaining on the pathway to degree completion while 6 also preventing some students from reenrolling or transferring to another institution to 7 complete a degree; and

8 WHEREAS, a decade of disinvestment has radically reduced state support for 9 Louisiana's colleges and universities and shifted the funding burden to students and their 10 parents; as a result, postsecondary education institutions are more reliant on self-generated 11 revenue, including student tuition and fees, to operate; therefore, a reasonable approach to 12 minimizing student debt and addressing debt relief for adult students must be considered.

13 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby 14 urge and request the Board of Regents, in collaboration with the public postsecondary 15 education management boards, to conduct a study of student debt relief measures, nationally 16 and statewide, and to submit a written report of findings and conclusions, including 17 recommendations for legislation relative to debt as a barrier to reenrollment for those who 18 have completed some postsecondary education, to the House Committee on Education and 19 the Senate Committee on Education not later than thirty days prior to the beginning of the 20 2020 Regular Session of the Legislature.

21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that such report shall include findings and 22 recommendations relative to establishing a student tuition relief and engagement program 23 that shall provide for the following:

24 (1) Identification and examination of successful programs nationally and within the 25 state, including pertinent background material, data, an inventory of existing programs, and 26 recognized best practices that may serve as models for a statewide program in Louisiana, 27 including:

28 (a) An analysis of the cost of attendance by institution, state support per student, 29 financial aid from nonstate sources, and population-based metrics to better understand 30 affordability and student cost options.

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(b) A recommendation for policy steps to improve public postsecondary education 2 affordability in Louisiana and maximize federal and state financial aid to both traditional and 3 nontraditional student populations, including:

4 (i) The development of a method of informing students of their estimated current student loan indebtedness for the purposes of planning prior to students incurring additional 5 6 debt for each upcoming academic term.

7 (ii) The development of a method of informing students of the average wages 8 earnable in careers that align with their selected programs or majors and the estimated 9 numbers of regional and statewide job openings and placement rates for such careers.

10 (iii) The development of a proposal related to debt mitigation, debt relief, or 11 payment deferrals using the expertise of the office of debt recovery within the Department 12 of Revenue, the office of the attorney general, and the public postsecondary education 13 management boards and institutions to develop and implement a student tuition relief 14 program in Louisiana.

15 (iv) An estimate of costs associated with the implementation of such a program and 16

identification of potential funding sources to sustain the program.

17 (2) A plan and timeline for implementation of the recommendations.

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the

19 chairman of the Board of Regents, the commissioner of higher education, and the chairman

20 of each public postsecondary education management board.

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)]

HCR 96 Engrossed 2019 Regular Session

Falconer

Requests the Bd. of Regents study and report on student debt relief measures to the legislative education committees not later than 30 days prior to the 2020 R.S.

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Education to the original resolution:

1. Specify report shall be submitted to the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education.

2. Add requirement that the findings and recommendations include the development of a method to inform students regarding salary and job openings.