
DIGEST

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HB 161 Original

2025 Regular Session

Hughes

Abstract: Provides for eligibility requirements for TOPS-Tech and TOPS-Tech Early Start.

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

TOPS-Tech

Present law provides for the TOPS-Tech Award for students who enroll in certain two-year programs. Requires as a requirement for eligibility for TOPS-Tech that a student enroll in certain associate's degree or shorter-term training and education programs.

Present law provides that the programs are aligned with state workforce priorities as determined by the Bd. of Regents and the La. Workforce Investment Council. Proposed law (R.S. 17:5002(D)(1)) instead requires the programs to be "qualified programs" according to the advisory council established in present law (R.S. 17:3047.1).

TOPS-Tech Early Start

Present law provides for a TOPS-Tech Early Start Award for eligible 11th and 12th grade students attending La. public high schools.

Present law provides that the award may be used at certain postsecondary education institutions for the purpose of pursuing an industry-based occupational or vocational education credential as defined by the Board of Regents when such credential also meets both of the following conditions:

- (1) Is identified by the Occupation Forecasting Conference as a credential for an occupation in top demand in Louisiana.
- (2) Is recognized by the State Industry-Based Certification Council.

Proposed law (R.S. 5081(B)(1)) instead requires any course taken with the award to be from a list of "qualified programs" according to the advisory council established in present law (R.S. 17:3047.1).

Proposed law applies to awards for the 2026-2027 school year and thereafter.

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

(Amends R.S. 17:5002(D)(1) and 5081(B)(1))