

Regular Session, 2014

HOUSE BILL NO. 977

BY REPRESENTATIVE KATRINA JACKSON

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

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 17:3048.1(A)(1)(b)(i), (c)(i)(aa), and (d)(i), relative to
3 qualifications for Taylor Opportunity Program for Students scholarships, to provide
4 with respect to eligibility requirements for participation in the program; and to
5 provide for related matters.

6 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

7 Section 1. R.S. 17:3048.1(A)(1)(b)(i), (c)(i)(aa), and (d)(i) are hereby amended and
8 reenacted to read as follows:

9 §3048.1. Program awards; eligibility; amounts; limitations; funding; administration

10 A.(1) As part of the Louisiana Taylor Opportunity Program for Students, the
11 state shall financially assist any student who enrolls on a full-time basis in a public
12 college or university in this state or a regionally accredited independent college or
13 university in the state that is a member of the Louisiana Association of Independent
14 Colleges and Universities, hereafter in this Chapter referred to collectively as
15 "eligible colleges and universities", to pursue an academic undergraduate degree or,
16 as provided by this Subsection, skill or occupational training as defined by the Board
17 of Regents, including a vocational or technical education certificate or diploma
18 program or a nonacademic undergraduate degree, and who meets the qualifications
19 of Subparagraph (b), (c), or (d) of this Paragraph and all of the applicable following
20 qualifications:

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(b)(i) Has been certified as provided in Subsection D of this Section to have graduated from a public high school or a nonpublic high school which has been approved by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, has a minimum cumulative grade point average of ~~2.50~~ 3.00 calculated on a 4.00 scale, has a minimum composite score on the 1990 version of the American College Test ~~which is at least equal to or higher than the state's~~ of the average composite score, rounded to the nearest whole number, reported for students enrolled during the prior year ~~at the institution at which the student is enrolled but never less than twenty~~ or an equivalent concordant value on an enhanced or revised version of such test or on the Scholastic Aptitude Test, and, unless granted an exception for cause by the administering agency, has enrolled in an eligible college or university as a first-time freshman not later than the semester, excluding summer semesters or sessions, immediately following the first anniversary of the date that the student graduated from high school or, if the student joins the United States Armed Forces within one year after graduating from high school, has enrolled in an eligible college or university as a first-time freshman not later than the semester, excluding summer semesters or sessions, immediately following the fifth anniversary of the date that the student graduated from high school; however, effective for the 1996-1997 school year and thereafter, if, on or prior to the fifth anniversary of the date that the student graduated from high school, the student reenlists in the United States Armed Forces and maintains continuous active duty, the five-year period shall be extended to the semester immediately following the one-year anniversary of the student's separation from active duty service. As distinguished from all other students qualifying for this program, a student who meets the requirements of this Subparagraph shall be the recipient of an "Opportunity Award" for the purposes of this program.

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(c)(i)(aa) Has been certified as provided in Subsection D of this Section to have graduated from a public high school or nonpublic high school which has been

1 approved by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, has enrolled,
 2 unless granted an exception for cause by the administering agency, in an eligible
 3 college or university as a first-time freshman not later than the semester, excluding
 4 summer semesters or sessions, immediately following the first anniversary of the
 5 date that the student graduated from high school, except as provided in Subitem (bb)
 6 of this Item, has achieved a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.50
 7 calculated on a 4.00 scale, and has a minimum composite score on the 1990 version
 8 of the American College Test of ~~twenty-three or higher~~ the average composite score,
 9 rounded to the nearest whole number, reported for students enrolled during the prior
 10 year at the institution at which the student is enrolled or an equivalent concordant
 11 value on any enhanced or revised version of such test or on the Scholastic Aptitude
 12 Test. As distinguished from all other students qualifying for this program, a student
 13 who meets the requirements of this Subparagraph shall receive and be recognized as
 14 the recipient of a "Performance Award" for the purposes of this program.

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 16 (d)(i) Has been certified as provided in Subsection D of this Section to have
 17 graduated from a public high school or nonpublic high school which has been
 18 approved by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education with a
 19 minimum cumulative grade point average of ~~3.50~~ 3.70 on a 4.00 scale and a
 20 minimum composite score of ~~twenty-seven or higher~~ of the average composite score, rounded to the nearest whole
 21 American College Test of the average composite score, rounded to the nearest whole
 22 number, reported for students enrolled during the prior year at the insitution at which
 23 the student is enrolled or an equivalent concordant value on any enhanced or revised
 24 version of such test or on the Scholastic Aptitude Test, and, unless granted an
 25 exception for cause by the administering agency, has enrolled in an eligible college
 26 or university as a first-time freshman not later than the semester, excluding summer
 27 semesters or sessions, immediately following the first anniversary of the date that the
 28 student graduated from high school or, if the student joins the United States Armed
 29 Forces within one year after graduating from high school, has enrolled in an eligible

1 college or university as a first-time freshman not later than the semester, excluding
 2 summer semesters or sessions, immediately following the fifth anniversary of the
 3 date that the student graduated from high school; however, effective for the 1996-
 4 1997 school year and thereafter, if, on or prior to the fifth anniversary of the date that
 5 the student graduated from high school, the student reenlists in the United States
 6 Armed Forces and maintains continuous active duty, the five-year period shall be
 7 extended to the semester immediately following the one-year anniversary of the
 8 student's separation from active duty service. As distinguished from all other
 9 students qualifying for this program, a student who meets the requirements of this
 10 Subparagraph shall receive and be recognized as the recipient of an "Honors Award"
 11 for the purposes of this program.

* * *

13 Section 2. The provisions of this Act are applicable to students graduating from high
 14 school during or after the 2014-2015 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)]

Katrina Jackson

HB No. 977

Abstract: Provides relative to eligibility requirements for participation in the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS).

Present law provides with respect to the Louisiana Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS). Under the program, the state shall financially assist any student who enrolls on a full-time basis in a public college or university or a regionally accredited independent college or university to pursue an academic undergraduate degree or skill or occupational training, and who meets the qualifications of present law.

Present law provides general requirements for participation in the TOPS program. Requires students to have graduated from a public high school or a nonpublic high school which has been approved by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE). Also requires that students be enrolled in an eligible college or university as a first-time freshman not later than the semester immediately following the first anniversary of the date that the student graduated from high school.

Present law provides with respect to the "Opportunity Award." Requires that the student has a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.50. Further requires that the student has a composite score on the American College Test (ACT) which is at least equal to or higher than the state's average composite score reported for the prior year but never less than 20 or

an equivalent concordant value on an enhanced or revised version of such test or on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT).

Proposed law changes required minimum grade point average to 3.00. Also deletes the minimum ACT score of 20 and replaces it with the average composite score reported for students enrolled during the prior year at the institution at which the student is enrolled.

Present law provides with respect to the "Performance Award." Requires that the student has a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.50. Further requires that the student has a composite score on the ACT of 23 or higher or an equivalent concordant value on any enhanced or revised version of such test or on the SAT.

Proposed law deletes minimum ACT score of 23 and replaces it with requirement that the minimum ACT score should be at least the average composite score reported for students enrolled during the prior year at which the student is enrolled or an equivalent concordant value on any enhanced or revised version of such test or on the SAT.

Present law provides with respect to the "Honors Award." Requires that the student has a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.50 and a score of 27 or higher on the ACT or an equivalent concordant value on any enhanced or revised version of such test or on the SAT.

Proposed law changes minimum grade point average to 3.70 and deletes the minimum ACT score of 27 and replaces it with requirement that the minimum ACT score should be at least the average composite score reported for students enrolled during the prior year at which the student is enrolled or an equivalent concordant value on any enhanced or revised version of such test or on the SAT.

Otherwise retains present law.

(Amends R.S. 17:3048.1(A)(1)(b)(i), (c)(i)(aa), and (d)(i))