

2016 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 581

BY REPRESENTATIVE STOKES

STUDENT/LOANS-SCHOLARSHIP: Provides, under specified circumstances, for repayment of a Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) award

1 AN ACT

2 To enact R.S. 17:5004 and 5004.1, relative to the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students;  
3 to require that program award recipients repay award amounts under certain  
4 circumstances; to provide relative to repayment amounts; to require the Louisiana  
5 Student Financial Assistance Commission to promulgate rules relative to repayment;  
6 to require that these rules provide for means of collection and for specified  
7 exceptions; to provide relative to effectiveness; and to provide for related matters.

8 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

9 Section 1. R.S. 17:5004 and 5004.1 are hereby enacted to read as follows:

10 §5004. Repayment; rules

11 A. A student shall repay award amounts paid to a postsecondary education  
12 institution on his behalf, as provided in this Subsection, if he fails to meet the  
13 requirements provided in R.S. 17:5041 and 5042 relative to maintaining eligibility  
14 or resigns from the institution. If he fails to meet these requirements or resigns:

15 (1) As a freshman, he shall repay one hundred percent of the amount  
16 awarded.

17 (2) As a sophomore, he shall repay seventy-five percent of the amount  
18 awarded.

19 (3) As a junior, he shall repay fifty percent of the amount awarded.

20 (4) As a senior, he shall repay twenty-five percent of the amount awarded.

21 B. The administering agency shall promulgate rules necessary to implement  
22 the provisions of this Section. Such rules shall include the following:

1           (1) Provision for all available means of collecting amounts owed and interest  
2           on unpaid amounts.

3           (2) Provision for circumstances under which a student shall be excepted from  
4           the repayment requirements in Subsection A of this Section. Such rules shall provide  
5           for the definition, certification requirements, and maximum duration of such  
6           circumstances, which shall be limited to the following:

- 7           (a) Parental leave.
- 8           (b) Physical rehabilitation program.
- 9           (c) Substance abuse rehabilitation program.
- 10          (d) Temporary disability.
- 11          (e) Permanent disability.
- 12          (f) Exceptional educational opportunity.
- 13          (g) Religious commitment.
- 14          (h) Death in immediate family.
- 15          (i) Military service.
- 16          (j) Transfer to a selective enrollment program.
- 17          (k) Exceptional circumstances.

18           §5004.1. Repayment; exceptions

19           The provisions of R.S. 17:5004 shall not apply to a student who graduates  
20           from high school prior to the 2015-2016 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)]

HB 581 Original

2016 Regular Session

Stokes

**Abstract:** Requires a student to repay TOPS award amounts if he fails to meet requirements for maintaining eligibility or resigns from college; applicable to students graduating from high school during or after the 2015-2016 school year.

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. Once enrolled in college, requires that students meet certain requirements in order to maintain continued eligibility. Such requirements include but are not limited to making steady academic progress while earning

enough credits to maintain full-time status, maintaining a minimum required grade point average, and having no criminal conviction except for misdemeanor traffic violations.

Proposed law requires a student to repay award amounts paid to a postsecondary education institution on his behalf if he fails to meet the requirements for maintaining eligibility or resigns from college; provides that if he fails to meet these requirements or resigns:

- (1) As a freshman, he shall repay 100% of the amount awarded.
- (2) As a sophomore, he shall repay 75% percent of the amount awarded.
- (3) As a junior, he shall repay 50% of the amount awarded.
- (4) As a senior, he shall repay 25% of the amount awarded.

Proposed law requires the administering agency (the La. Student Financial Assistance Commission) to promulgate rules necessary to implement proposed law, including provisions for the following:

- (1) Collecting amounts owed and interest on unpaid amounts.
- (2) Circumstances under which a student shall be excepted from the proposed law repayment requirements; requires that these rules provide for the definition, certification requirements, and maximum duration of these circumstances, which shall be limited to the following exceptions:
  - (a) Parental leave
  - (b) Physical rehabilitation program
  - (c) Substance abuse rehabilitation program
  - (d) Temporary disability
  - (e) Permanent disability
  - (f) Exceptional educational opportunity
  - (g) Religious commitment
  - (h) Death of immediate family
  - (i) Military service
  - (j) Transfer to a selective enrollment program
  - (k) Exceptional circumstances

(Adds R.S. 17:5004 and 5004.1)