
DIGEST

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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)