
DIGEST

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HB 846 Original

2016 Regular Session

Hilferty

Abstract: Requires the repayment of Taylor Opportunity Program for Students award amounts under certain circumstances; applicable to persons graduating from high school during or after the 2016-17 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 for initial eligibility. Also provides specific academic and other requirements once enrolled in college in order to maintain eligibility.

Proposed law, applicable to students graduating from high school during or after the 2016-17 school year:

- (1) 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 the institution.
- (2) Requires award recipients, upon receipt of a bachelor's degree or postgraduate degree, as applicable, to do one of the following:
 - (a) Demonstrate proof of residency in La. for at least one year for each full academic year of award received by proof of the following as required by the administering agency or by other proof required by the administering agency by rule: if registered to vote, he is registered in La.; if licensed to drive a motor vehicle, he is in possession of a La. driver's license; owning a motor vehicle located within La., he is in possession of La. registration for that vehicle; or if earning an income, he has filed a La. state income tax return and has complied with state income tax laws and regulations.
 - (b) Repay a full academic year of award for each year he fails to prove residency in La.

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)