

Regular Session, 2013

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 206

BY REPRESENTATIVE ORTEGO

A RESOLUTION

To create a task force to study issues relative to tuition costs at public postsecondary education institutions and to submit a written report of task force findings and recommendations to the House Committee on Education not later than sixty days prior to the beginning of the 2014 Regular Session of the Legislature of Louisiana.

WHEREAS, Louisiana's public postsecondary education system has faced severe budget cuts in the last several years; and

WHEREAS, to compensate for this loss of state funding, public postsecondary education institutions have had to increase tuition and decrease spending, often in ways that compromise the quality of the education they offer; and

WHEREAS, these cuts have significantly reduced college access and affordability and have shifted costs from the state to students and families; and

WHEREAS, declining state funding and the rising cost of tuition have serious consequences for students, their families, and the state's economy as well; and

WHEREAS, research has shown that rapidly rising tuition results in declining enrollment; and

WHEREAS, increasing tuition costs also drive up the cost of the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS); and

WHEREAS, TOPS was created by the legislature in 1997 as a way to improve access to postsecondary education institutions for high school graduates; and

WHEREAS, additionally, the Granting Autonomies and Resources for Diplomas Act, enacted by the legislature in 2010, was created to address the many challenges facing public postsecondary education in Louisiana, including those dealing with tuition; and

WHEREAS, many students who graduate from high school do not know what opportunities are available to them and how to successfully access and navigate the

postsecondary education system in order to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to be successful in life regardless of what path they choose to pursue; and

WHEREAS, promoting college access and affordability is an urgent priority for Louisiana if the state is to develop productive citizens who successfully compete in today's global economy; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary and appropriate that a comprehensive study be conducted to review and examine the rising cost of tuition and other related issues in order to maximize higher education opportunities for all students.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby create a task force to study issues relative to tuition costs at public postsecondary education institutions and to submit a written report of task force findings and recommendations, including any recommendations for legislation, to the House Committee on Education not later than sixty days prior to the beginning of the 2014 Regular Session of the Legislature of Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall be composed of the following members:

- (1) The commissioner of higher education, or his designee.
- (2) The chairman of the Board of Regents, or his designee.
- (3) The chairman of the Board of Supervisors of Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, or his designee.
- (4) The chairman of the Board of Supervisors of Southern University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, or his designee.
- (5) The chairman of the Board of Supervisors for the University of Louisiana System, or his designee.
- (6) The chairman of the Board of Supervisors of Community and Technical Colleges, or his designee.
- (7) A faculty representative from a public postsecondary four-year institution, to be appointed by the commissioner of higher education.
- (8) A faculty representative from a public postsecondary two-year institution, to be appointed by the commissioner of higher education.

(9) The chairman of the Louisiana Student Financial Assistance Commission, or his designee.

(10) Five students representing public postsecondary education institutions to be appointed by the commissioner of higher education.

(11) Two members representing business and industry to be appointed by the governor.

(12) The state superintendent of education, or his designee.

(13) The president of the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, or his designee.

(14) Five public high school students to be appointed by the state superintendent of education.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study shall include but not be limited to a review and examination of the following issues:

(1) The rising cost of tuition at public postsecondary education institutions.

(2) The impact of such rising tuition costs on TOPS and any possible changes to the program that may be needed as a result.

(3) The impact of such rising tuition costs on the Granting Resources and Autonomies for Diplomas Act and any possible changes to the Act that may be needed as a result.

(4) The impact of such rising costs on the quality of the education programs offered to students by public postsecondary education institutions.

(5) The cost savings, including those to TOPS, that may result if more students enroll in community and technical colleges and then transfer to four-year institutions.

(6) Any additional strategies or incentives for increasing college access and affordability.

(7) Any new methods for imposing tuition that could provide additional revenue for public postsecondary education.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the commissioner of higher education or his designee shall be responsible for convening the task force and for designating staff to assist the task force in conducting its study.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that members of the task force shall serve without compensation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this Resolution shall be transmitted to the commissioner of higher education, the chairmen of the Board of Regents, the Board of Supervisors of Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, the Board of Supervisors of Southern University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, the Board of Supervisors for the University of Louisiana System, the Board of Supervisors of Community and Technical Colleges, the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance Commission, the state superintendent of education, the president of the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the governor.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES