

2016 Regular Session

SENATE BILL NO. 81

BY SENATOR MORRISH

TOPS. Provides relative to TOPS award amounts. (gov sig)

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AN ACT

To amend and reenact R.S. 17:5002(A), (B), and (D), relative to the monetary amounts of awards granted pursuant to the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students; to provide for maximum award amounts; to provide for future adjustments of maximum award amounts; and to provide for related matters.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

Section 1. R.S. 17:5002(A), (B), and (D) are hereby amended and reenacted to read as follows:

§5002. Awards and amounts

A. ~~(1)~~ A student shall be eligible for an Opportunity, Performance, Honors, or TOPS-Tech Award based on his academic achievement.

**(2) Beginning with the 2016-2017 award year, the award amount as provided for in Subsection B or D of this Section to a student enrolled in any given institution shall be equal to the award amount paid for a student at that institution during the 2016-2017 academic year unless the legislature, by law, increases the award amounts.**

**(3) Beginning with the 2018-2019 award year and every odd-numbered**

1 year thereafter, the legislature may increase the award amount if the  
2 administering agency recommends to the legislature that changes be made to  
3 align the award amounts granted pursuant to this Chapter with changes in the  
4 Consumer Price Index.

5 (3) The maximum award amounts specified in this Subsection shall be  
6 exclusive of any additional amounts awarded to students who receive a  
7 Performance Award or an Honors Award.

8 B. Any student who is eligible for an Opportunity, Performance, or Honors  
9 Award pursuant to this Chapter and who has enrolled:

10 (1) In any public college or university in this state, shall be awarded by the  
11 state an amount determined by the administering agency to equal the tuition charged  
12 by the public college or university during the 2016-2017 academic year.

13 (2) At any regionally accredited independent college or university in the state  
14 which is a member of the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and  
15 Universities to pursue an academic undergraduate degree, shall be awarded by the  
16 state an amount to be determined by the administering agency to equal the weighted  
17 average of amounts paid under this Section for students attending public colleges and  
18 universities that offer academic undergraduate degrees at the baccalaureate level  
19 during the 2016-2017 academic year.

20 (3) In a school that has a valid and current certificate of registration issued  
21 by the Louisiana State Board of Cosmetology in accordance with law and that is  
22 accredited by an accrediting organization recognized by the United States  
23 Department of Education or in any proprietary school that has a valid and current  
24 license issued by the Board of Regents in accordance with law and that is accredited  
25 by an accrediting organization recognized by the United States Department of  
26 Education, shall be awarded by the state an amount determined by the administering  
27 agency to equal the weighted average of amounts paid under this Section for students  
28 attending public colleges and universities during the 2016-2017 academic year and  
29 who are enrolled in the permitted skill or occupational training, as may be applicable.

1 (4) In an out-of-state college or university that is specifically designed to  
 2 accommodate deaf and hard-of-hearing students under R.S. 17:5027(C), shall be  
 3 awarded an amount determined by the administering agency to equal the weighted  
 4 average of amounts paid under this Section for students attending Louisiana public  
 5 colleges and universities that offer academic undergraduate degrees **during the**  
 6 **2016-2017 academic year.**

7 \* \* \*

8 D.(1) Except as otherwise provided in this Subsection, a student who is  
 9 eligible for a TOPS-Tech Award pursuant to this Chapter and who is enrolled:

10 (a) In an eligible public college or university that does not offer an academic  
 11 undergraduate degree at the baccalaureate level in those associate's degree or other  
 12 shorter-term training and education programs that are aligned to state workforce  
 13 priorities as determined by the Board of Regents and the Louisiana Workforce  
 14 Investment Council shall be awarded by the state an amount determined by the  
 15 administering agency to equal the tuition charged by the college or university **during**  
 16 **the 2016-2017 academic year.** If the Board of Regents and the Louisiana Workforce  
 17 Investment Council determine that a program is no longer aligned with those  
 18 priorities, an otherwise eligible student who had previously received an award and  
 19 enrolled in that program may continue to use the award.

20 (b) In an eligible college or university other than as provided for in  
 21 Subparagraph (a) of this Paragraph in those associate's degree or other shorter-term  
 22 training education programs that are aligned to state workforce priorities as  
 23 determined by the Board of Regents and the Louisiana Workforce Investment  
 24 Council shall be awarded by the state an amount determined by the administering  
 25 agency to equal the weighted average of amounts paid to students attending an  
 26 eligible public college or university that does not offer an academic undergraduate  
 27 degree at the baccalaureate level **during the 2016-2017 academic year.** If the Board  
 28 of Regents and the Louisiana Workforce Investment Council determine that a  
 29 program is no longer aligned with those priorities, an otherwise eligible student who

1 had previously received an award and enrolled in that program may continue to use  
2 the award.

3 (2) A student who graduated prior to the 2016-2017 school year, who is  
4 eligible for a TOPS-Tech Award pursuant to this Chapter, and who is enrolled:

5 (a) In an eligible college or university that does not offer an academic  
6 undergraduate degree at the baccalaureate level shall be awarded by the state an  
7 amount determined by the administering agency to equal the tuition charged by the  
8 college or university **during the 2016-2017 academic year.**

9 (b) In an eligible college or university other than as provided for in  
10 Subparagraph (a) of this Paragraph shall be awarded by the state an amount  
11 determined by the administering agency to equal the weighted average of amounts  
12 paid to students attending an eligible public college or university that does not offer  
13 an academic undergraduate degree at the baccalaureate level **during the 2016-2017**  
14 **academic year.**

15 \* \* \*

16 Section 2. This Act shall become effective upon signature by the governor or, if not  
17 signed by the governor, upon expiration of the time for bills to become law without signature  
18 by the governor, as provided by Article III, Section 18 of the Constitution of Louisiana. If  
19 vetoed by the governor and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become  
20 effective on the day following such approval.

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The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part  
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Cheryl Serrett.

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DIGEST

SB 81 Original                      2016 Regular Session                      Morrish

Present law provides as follows relative to the dollar amount awarded to Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) recipients of Opportunity, Performance, or Honors awards:

- (1) For a recipient who attends a La. public college or university to pursue an academic undergraduate degree, the amount is an amount determined by the La. Student Financial Assistance Commission (LASFAC) to equal the tuition charged by the college or university attended.
- (2) For a recipient who attends an eligible state nonpublic college or university, the amount is an amount determined by LASFAC to equal the weighted average amount of amounts paid for students attending public colleges and universities that offer

academic undergraduate degrees at the baccalaureate level.

- (3) For a recipient who enrolls in a cosmetology school registered by the La. State Board of Cosmetology or a proprietary school licensed by the Board of Regents, the amount is equal to the amount determined by LASFAC to equal the weighted average of amounts for students attending public colleges and universities who are enrolled in the permitted skill or occupational training.
- (4) For a recipient who enrolls in an out-of-state college or university that is specifically designed to accommodate deaf and hard-of-hearing students, the award amount is an amount determined by LASFAC to equal the weighted average of amounts paid for students attending La. public colleges and universities that offer academic undergraduate degrees.
- (5) Provides an additional \$200 per semester, or \$400 per academic year, to a recipient of a Performance Award, and provides an additional \$400 per semester, or \$800 per academic year, to a recipient of an Honors Award.

Relative to the dollar amount of a TOPS-Tech Award, present law provides as follows:

- (1) For a recipient who attends an eligible La. public college or university that does not offer an academic undergraduate degree at the baccalaureate level, in those associate's degree or other shorter-term training and education programs that are aligned to state workforce priorities as determined by the Board of Regents and the Louisiana Workforce Investment Council, the award amount equals the actual cost of tuition.
- (2) For a recipient who attends any other eligible postsecondary education institution in those associate's degree or other shorter-term training education programs that are aligned to state workforce priorities as determined by the Board of Regents and the Louisiana Workforce Investment Council, the award amount equals the amount determined by LASFAC to equal the weighted average of amounts paid for students attending public institutions that do not offer a baccalaureate degree.

Present law provides that for students who graduated prior to the 2016-2017 school year, eligibility for a TOPS-Tech award is not contingent upon a determination by the Bd. of Regents and the La. Workforce Investment Council that the students course of study is aligned with state workforce priorities.

Proposed law retains present law.

Proposed law provides that:

- (1) Beginning with the 2016-2017 award year, the amount awarded by the state to a student who is the recipient of any TOPS award shall equal the award amount paid for the 2016-2017 award year, unless the legislature increases the amounts by law.
- (2) Beginning with the 2018-2019 award year and every odd-numbered year thereafter, the legislature may increase the award amount if the administering agency recommends to the Legislature that the award amounts increase to align with changes in the Consumer Price Index.
- (3) Retains payment of the supplemental amounts established in present law for a recipient of a Performance or Honors award.

Effective upon signature of the governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Amends R.S. 17:5002(A), (B), and (D))