

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 110

BY SENATOR MORRISH

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To create a task force to study the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS), including a review of the program's purpose and history, the role of the program in relation to tuition and fees, and other institutional, state, and federal financial assistance programs, and ways to ensure the program's long-term viability.

WHEREAS, many questions surround various aspects of the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students, including its original legislative intent, its impact on postsecondary access and success, and the costs and benefits of the program; and

WHEREAS, a great number of changes have occurred within Louisiana's educational system since the inception of the program, including the creation of the community college system, the establishment of admission standards for public universities, and the expansion of dual enrollment opportunities for high school students; and

WHEREAS, the way the state funds postsecondary education has changed significantly over the last twenty years; and

WHEREAS, for the first time in the history of the program, TOPS was not fully funded for the 2016-2017 academic year and may not be fully funded for the upcoming academic year; and

WHEREAS, the legislature seeks to determine a fiscally responsible path forward that will honor the state's commitment to the students who work diligently to meet the qualifications to earn a TOPS award, with the expectation they will receive the full award amount.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby create a task force to study the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS), including a review of the program's purpose and history, the role of the program in relation to tuition and fees and other institutional, state, and federal financial assistance programs, and ways to ensure the program's long-term viability.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall be composed of ten members as follows:

(1) The chairman of the Senate Committee on Education, who shall serve as the chairman of the task force.

(2) The chairman of the House Committee on Education.

(3) Two members of the Senate, appointed by the chairman of the Senate Committee on Education.

(4) Two members of the House of Representatives, appointed by the chairman of the House Committee on Education.

(5) Two members of the Senate, appointed by the president of the Senate.

(6) Two members of the House of Representatives, appointed by the speaker of the house.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that members shall receive the same per diem and travel reimbursement for attending meetings of the task force as is normally provided for meetings of legislative committees.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the staff of senate and house education committees shall provide staff support to the task force.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall hold its first meeting no later than October 1, 2017, and shall meet thereafter at the call of the chairman.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall submit a written report of its findings, including any recommendations for legislation or changes in policy, to the president of the Senate and the speaker of the house no later than February 15, 2018.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES