

## HOUSE SUMMARY OF SENATE AMENDMENTS

**HB 870**

**2020 Regular Session**

**Garofalo**

TOPS: Provides relative to qualifications for Taylor Opportunity Program for Students scholarships

### Synopsis of Senate Amendments

1. Delay by one year the effectiveness of the present law increase in high school GPA required for initial eligibility for Performance and Honors awards.

### Digest of Bill as Finally Passed by Senate

#### TOPS eligibility for students impacted by the COVID-19 public health emergency

Proposed law makes these modifications to initial eligibility requirements for a Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) award:

- (1) The deadline for taking ACT or SAT is Sept. 30, 2020. (The deadline is normally April as provided by rule.)

Present law provides that a student loses a semester of eligibility if he is late qualifying. Proposed law provides that present law shall not be applied to a student who qualifies under the extended deadline.

- (2) Provides that if any Jump Start graduation requirement was waived by a high school for graduation purposes, it shall also be waived for TOPS-Tech eligibility purposes.
- (3) Authorizes the administering agency to waive present law home study requirements if it determines that a student's failure to meet them was, more likely than not, due solely to consequences of measures taken to limit the spread of COVID-19.

Proposed law makes these modifications to continuing eligibility requirements for a TOPS award with respect to the 2019-2020 academic year:

- (1) Waives requirements for steady academic progress and for the achievement of a certain cumulative grade point average (GPA).
- (2) Extends the time a student has to recover an award that was suspended because of a low GPA or failure to make steady academic progress.
- (3) Authorizes the administering agency to waive other present law provisions if it determines that failure to comply is, more likely than not, due solely to a consequence of measures taken to limit the spread of COVID-19.

#### TOPS eligibility, generally

Present law requires a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 for initial eligibility for both a Performance and an Honors Award (these awards include a cash stipend on top of the baseline tuition award). Applicable initially to students graduating from high school in the 2020-2021 school year, increases the GPA for initial eligibility for a Performance Award from 3.00 to 3.25 and an Honors Award from 3.00 to 3.50. Proposed law delays the initial applicability of such GPA increases from students graduating from high school in the 2020-2021 school year to those graduating in the 2021-2022 school year.

(Amends R.S. 17:5024(A)(2)(c) and 5103)