

2018 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 161

BY REPRESENTATIVE GAROFALO

TOPS: Provides, under specified circumstances, for repayment of a Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) award

1 AN ACT

2 To enact R.S. 17:5004 and 5004.1, relative to the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students;  
3 to require that program award recipients repay award amounts under certain  
4 circumstances; to require the Board of Regents to promulgate rules relative to  
5 repayment; to require that these rules provide for means of collection and for  
6 specified exceptions; to provide relative to applicability; and to provide for related  
7 matters.

8 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

9 Section 1. R.S. 17:5004 and 5004.1 are hereby enacted to read as follows:

10 §5004. Repayment; rules

11 A. A student shall repay award amounts paid to a postsecondary education  
12 institution on his behalf if he fails to meet the requirements provided in R.S. 17:5041  
13 and 5042 relative to maintaining eligibility or resigns from the institution.

14 B. The administering agency shall promulgate rules necessary to implement  
15 the provisions of this Section. Such rules shall include the following:

16 (1) Provision for all available means of collecting amounts owed and interest  
17 on unpaid amounts.

18 (2) Provision for circumstances under which a student shall be excepted from  
19 the repayment requirement in Subsection A of this Section. Such rules shall provide

1        for the definition, certification requirements, and maximum duration of such  
2        circumstances, which shall be limited to the following:

3                (a) Parental leave.

4                (b) Physical rehabilitation program.

5                (c) Substance abuse rehabilitation program.

6                (d) Temporary disability.

7                (e) Permanent disability.

8                (f) Exceptional educational opportunity.

9                (g) Religious commitment.

10               (h) Death in immediate family.

11               (i) Military service.

12               (j) Transfer to a selective enrollment program.

13               (k) Exceptional circumstances.

14        §5004.1. Repayment; exceptions

15               The provisions of R.S. 17:5004 shall not apply to a student who graduates  
16        from high school prior to the 2017-2018 school year.

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DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

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HB 161 Original

2018 Regular Session

Garofalo

**Abstract:** Requires a student to repay TOPS award amounts if he fails to meet requirements for maintaining eligibility or resigns from college; applicable to students graduating from high school during or after the 2017-18 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. Once enrolled in college, requires that students meet certain requirements in order to maintain continued eligibility. Such requirements include but are not limited to making steady academic progress while earning enough credits to maintain full-time status, maintaining a minimum required grade point average, and having no criminal conviction except for misdemeanor traffic violations.

Proposed law, applicable to students who graduate from high school during or after the 2017-18 school year, 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 college. Proposed law requires the administering agency (the Bd.

of Regents) to promulgate rules necessary to implement proposed law, including provision for the following:

- (1) Collecting amounts owed and interest on unpaid amounts.
- (2) Circumstances under which a student shall be excepted from proposed law repayment requirement; 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)