

Regular Session, 2009

SENATE BILL NO. 85

BY SENATOR B. GAUTREAUX

Prefiled pursuant to Article III, Section 2(A)(4)(b)(i) of the Constitution of Louisiana.

TOPS. Establishes a cap on TOPS award amounts. (8/15/09)

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AN ACT

To enact R.S. 17:3048.1(Y), relative to the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students; to provide relative to the monetary amounts of awards granted pursuant to the program; to provide for maximum award amounts; and to provide for related matters.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

Section 1. R.S. 17:3048.1(Y) is hereby enacted to read as follows:

§3048.1. Program awards; eligibility; amounts; limitations; funding; administration

* * *

Y.(1) Beginning with the 2010-2011 academic year and thereafter, the maximum tuition award amount provided by the state to an otherwise qualified student who is the recipient of an award granted pursuant to this Chapter, and who has enrolled in any public college or university in the state, shall not exceed an amount determined by the administering agency to equal the tuition charged by the public college or university attended in the state or one thousand six hundred dollars per semester, whichever is less.

(2) For an otherwise qualified student who is the recipient of an award granted pursuant to this Chapter, and who has enrolled in a regionally

1 accredited independent college or university in the state which is a member of
 2 the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, the
 3 maximum tuition award amount shall not exceed an amount determined by the
 4 administering agency to equal the weighted average amounts awarded under
 5 this Section for students attending public colleges or universities in the state or
 6 one thousand six hundred dollars per semester, whichever is less.

7 (3) The maximum tuition award amount specified in this Subsection shall
 8 be exclusive of any additional amounts awarded to students who qualify to
 9 receive a Performance or Honors award.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Jeanne C. Johnston.

DIGEST

Present law provides a program of merit scholarships for first time freshman attending public postsecondary institutions or regionally accredited independent colleges or universities in this state who meet a specified GPA, ACT score, and core curriculum requirements as follows:

1. TOPS-Tech Award in the amount of actual tuition for those attending technical colleges.
2. TOPS-Tech Early Start Award in the amount of \$150/three-hour or equivalent time course taken by eligible 11th and 12th grade high school students enrolled in a Louisiana public postsecondary institution and pursuing an industry-based occupational or vocational-technical credential.
3. Opportunity Award in the amount of the tuition charged for attendance by a public college or university, or an amount equal to the weighted state average tuition charged by public four-year colleges for attendance at a regionally accredited independent college or university, as determined by the administering agency.
4. Performance Award in the amount of tuition, plus \$200 per semester, for attendance at a public college or university, or the weighted state average tuition charged by public four-year institutions, plus \$200 per semester, for attendance at a regionally accredited independent college or university, as determined by the administering agency.
5. Honors Award in the amount of tuition, plus \$400 per semester, for attendance at a public college or university, or the weighted state average tuition charged by public four-year colleges' tuition, plus \$400 per semester, for attendance at a regionally accredited independent college or university, as determined by the administering agency.

Proposed law retains present law but, beginning with the 2010-2011 academic year, establishes a maximum TOPS award amount as follows:

1. For students attending a public college or university, an amount equal to the tuition charged at the institution as determined by the administering agency or \$1,600 per semester, whichever is less.

2. For students attending an eligible independent college or university, an amount equal to the weighted state average public institution tuition amount as determined by the administering agency, or \$1,600 per semester, whichever is less.

Proposed law specifies that such maximum award amount is exclusive of any additional payments awarded to students who qualify to receive a Performance or Honors award.

Effective August 15, 2009.

(Adds R.S. 17:3048.1(Y))