

Regular Session, 2014

SENATE BILL NO. 340

BY SENATOR DONAHUE

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

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AN ACT

To enact R.S. 17:3048.1(Y), 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; to provide for effectiveness; 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:

**Y.(1) Notwithstanding any provision of this Chapter to the contrary, beginning with the 2015-2016 award year, the amount awarded by the state to a student who is the recipient of any award granted pursuant to this Chapter shall not exceed an amount equal to the award amount paid for the 2014-2015 award year.**

**(2) Beginning with the 2016-2017 award year, the administering agency may consider any adjustments necessary to align the award amounts granted pursuant to this Chapter with changes in the Consumer Price Index and recommend any such adjustment to the legislature for approval during legislative sessions held in odd-numbered years.**

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

4                   **(4) The provisions of this Subsection shall be implemented only at such**  
 5                   **time as the Constitution of Louisiana is amended to grant postsecondary**  
 6                   **education management boards the authority to establish the tuition and**  
 7                   **mandatory fee amounts charged by institutions under their supervision and**  
 8                   **management, without legislative approval.**

9                   Section 2. This Act shall become effective upon signature by the governor or, if not  
 10                   signed by the governor, upon expiration of the time for bills to become law without signature  
 11                   by the governor, as provided by Article III, Section 18 of the Constitution of Louisiana. If  
 12                   vetoed by the governor and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become  
 13                   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 Jeanne C. Johnston.

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#### DIGEST

Donahue (SB 340)

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 or skill or occupational training, 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 or an amount determined by LASFAC to equal the weighted average of amounts paid for students attending public colleges and universities who are enrolled in permitted skill or occupational training.
- (3) For a recipient who is eligible to use the award at an out-of-state nonpublic college or university to pursue an academic undergraduate degree, the 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.
- (4) For a student who is the recipient of an Opportunity, Performance, or Honors award 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 the 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.

- (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 or higher to pursue permitted skill or occupational training, the amount equals the actual cost of tuition.
- (2) For a recipient who attends any other eligible postsecondary education institution, the amount equals the amount determined by LASFAC to equal the weighted average of amounts paid for students attending public institutions who are enrolled in the permitted skill or occupational training.

Proposed law provides that, beginning with the 2015-2016 award year:

- (1) The amount awarded by the state to a student who is the recipient of any TOPS award shall not exceed the award amount established for each respective award for the 2014-2015 award year.
- (2) Retains payment of the supplemental amounts established in present law for a recipient of a Performance or Honors award.

Proposed law provides that, beginning with the 2016-2017 award year, the administering agency may consider any adjustments necessary to align TOPS award amounts with changes in the Consumer Price Index and recommend any such adjustments to the legislature for approval during legislative sessions held in odd-numbered years.

Provides that proposed law shall be implemented only at such time as the Constitution of Louisiana is amended to grant postsecondary education management boards the authority to establish the tuition and mandatory fee amounts charged by institutions under their supervision and management, without legislative approval.

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

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