

Regular Session, 2014

HOUSE BILL NO. 1023

BY REPRESENTATIVE KLECKLEY

STUDENT/LOANS-SCHOLARSHIP: Provides relative to Taylor Opportunity Program for Students award payments and eligibility criteria

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 17:3048.1(A)(1)(b)(i), (2), and (5)(b)(i), and (H)(3)(c), and to  
3 enact R.S. 17:3048.1(Y); relative to the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students;  
4 to provide relative to award amounts; to provide relative to payment of awards; to  
5 provide relative to eligibility requirements for awards; to provide an effective date;  
6 and to provide for related matters.

7 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

8 Section 1. This Act shall be known and may be cited as the "Taylor Opportunity  
9 Program for Students-Performance, Accountability, and Tuition Sustainability (TOPS-  
10 PATS) Act".

11 Section 2. R.S. 17:3048.1(A)(1)(b)(i), (2), and (5)(b)(i), and (H)(3)(c) are hereby  
12 amended and reenacted and R.S. 17:3048.1(Y) is hereby enacted to read as follows:

13 §3048.1. Program awards; eligibility; amounts; limitations; funding; administration

14 A.(1) As part of the Louisiana Taylor Opportunity Program for Students, the  
15 state shall financially assist any student who enrolls on a full-time basis in a public  
16 college or university in this state or a regionally accredited independent college or  
17 university in the state that is a member of the Louisiana Association of Independent  
18 Colleges and Universities, hereafter in this Chapter referred to collectively as  
19 "eligible colleges and universities", to pursue an academic undergraduate degree or,  
20 as provided by this Subsection, skill or occupational training as defined by the Board

1 of Regents, including a vocational or technical education certificate or diploma  
2 program or a nonacademic undergraduate degree, and who meets the qualifications  
3 of Subparagraph (b), (c), or (d) of this Paragraph and all of the applicable following  
4 qualifications:

5 \* \* \*

6 (b)(i) Has been certified as provided in Subsection D of this Section to have  
7 graduated from a public high school or a nonpublic high school which has been  
8 approved by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, has a  
9 minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.50 calculated on a 4.00 scale for  
10 students graduating during the 2016-2017 school year or before, or 2.75 for students  
11 graduating during the 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years, or 3.0 for  
12 students graduating during the 2020-2021 school year or thereafter, has a composite  
13 score on the 1990 version of the American College Test which is ~~at least~~ equal to or  
14 higher than the state's average composite score, rounded to the nearest whole  
15 number, reported for the prior year but never less than twenty for students graduating  
16 during the 2016-2017 school year or before, never less than twenty-two for students  
17 graduating during the 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years, and  
18 never less than twenty-four for students graduating during the 2020-2021 school year  
19 or thereafter or an equivalent concordant value on an enhanced or revised version of  
20 such test or on the Scholastic Aptitude Test, and, unless granted an exception for  
21 cause by the administering agency, has enrolled in an eligible college or university  
22 as a first-time freshman not later than the semester, excluding summer semesters or  
23 sessions, immediately following the first anniversary of the date that the student  
24 graduated from high school or, if the student joins the United States Armed Forces  
25 within one year after graduating from high school, has enrolled in an eligible college  
26 or university as a first-time freshman not later than the semester, excluding summer  
27 semesters or sessions, immediately following the fifth anniversary of the date that  
28 the student graduated from high school; however, effective for the 1996-1997 school  
29 year and thereafter, if, on or prior to the fifth anniversary of the date that the student

1 graduated from high school, the student reenlists in the United States Armed Forces  
2 and maintains continuous active duty, the five-year period shall be extended to the  
3 semester immediately following the one-year anniversary of the student's separation  
4 from active duty service. As distinguished from all other students qualifying for this  
5 program, a student who meets the requirements of this Subparagraph shall be the  
6 recipient of an "Opportunity Award" for the purposes of this program.

7 \* \* \*

8 (2)(a) Any student who applies for an Opportunity Award in accordance with  
9 Subparagraph (A)(1)(b), who enrolled in any public college or university in the state  
10 to pursue an academic undergraduate degree or skill or occupational training,  
11 including a vocational or technical education certificate or diploma program or a  
12 nonacademic undergraduate degree, and who meets the qualifications enumerated  
13 in Subparagraphs (A)(1)(a), (e), and (f), shall be awarded by the state an amount  
14 determined by the administering agency to equal the tuition charged by the public  
15 college or university attended in the state pursuant to Subsection Y of this Section.

16 (b) For any student who ~~meets such qualifications and~~ applies for an  
17 Opportunity Award in accordance with Subparagraph (A)(1)(b), who has enrolled  
18 at any regionally accredited independent college or university in the state which is  
19 a member of the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities to  
20 pursue an academic undergraduate degree or skill or occupational training, including  
21 a vocational or technical education certificate or diploma program or a nonacademic  
22 undergraduate degree, the state shall award an amount to be determined ~~by the~~  
23 ~~administering agency to equal the weighted average of amounts paid under this~~  
24 ~~Section for students attending public colleges and universities that offer academic~~  
25 ~~undergraduate degrees at the baccalaureate level or an amount to be determined by~~  
26 ~~the administering agency to equal the weighted average of amounts paid under this~~  
27 ~~Section for students attending public colleges and universities who are enrolled in~~  
28 ~~the permitted skill or occupational training, as may be applicable pursuant to~~  
29 Subsection Y of this Section.

1 \* \* \*

2 (5)

3 \* \* \*

4 (b)(i) For any student who is the recipient of an Opportunity Award and who  
5 is eligible to use the award at an out-of-state nonpublic college or university pursuant  
6 to the provisions of Subparagraph (a) of this Paragraph, the award amount to pursue  
7 an academic undergraduate degree shall be an amount determined ~~by the~~  
8 ~~administering agency to equal the weighted average of amounts paid under this~~  
9 ~~Section for students attending Louisiana public colleges and universities that offer~~  
10 academic undergraduate degrees pursuant to Subsection Y of this Section.

11 \* \* \*

12 H.

13 \* \* \*

14 (3)

15 \* \* \*

16 (c) The amount of the award benefits relative to tuition as provided for in  
17 Subparagraph (a) of this Paragraph shall not exceed the amounts determined by the  
18 administering agency to equal the tuition charged for the postgraduate study or for  
19 undergraduate full-time enrollment charged by the highest cost public college  
20 university in the state, whichever amount is less or, for Opportunity awards an  
21 amount to be determined in accordance with the provisions of Subsection Y of this  
22 Section.

23 \* \* \*

24 Y. Purpose. The legislature finds that postsecondary education should  
25 remain available to all qualified students, regardless of their financial means, and  
26 declares that enhanced access to postsecondary educational opportunities for  
27 Louisiana students by providing critically needed assistance to help cover the cost  
28 of attending postsecondary education institutions in the state is paramount. The  
29 legislature further finds that leveraging access to postsecondary education for

1 students ensures that all qualified students are afforded an opportunity to achieve  
2 their full educational potential, increase their overall quality of life, and maximize  
3 their contribution to the state's economic development. The legislature also finds that  
4 challenging our students by providing rigorous but achievable standards will  
5 empower our students to better prepare for their postsecondary educational  
6 opportunity and be more successful during and after their academic career. The  
7 legislature further finds that any funds that may be realized through savings in the  
8 Taylor Opportunity Program for Students should be used to further the purposes of  
9 programs established by the state Board of Regents to enhance access to  
10 postsecondary educational opportunities for Louisiana students with demonstrated  
11 financial need.

12 (1) Awards granted pursuant to the provisions of this Section to persons who  
13 commence full-time studies at a covered postsecondary education institution as a  
14 first-time freshman on or before June 30, 2015, shall be calculated as follows:

15 (a) Opportunity Award. (i) A student qualifying for an award pursuant to  
16 Subparagraph (A)(2)(a) of this Section shall be awarded in accordance with  
17 Paragraph (4) of this Subsection by the state an amount determined by the  
18 administering agency to equal the tuition charged by the public college or university  
19 attended in the state.

20 (ii) A student qualifying for an award pursuant to Subparagraph (A)(2)(b)  
21 or Item (A)(5)(b)(i) of this Section shall be awarded in accordance with Paragraph  
22 (4) of this Subsection an amount determined by the administering agency to equal  
23 the weighted average of amounts paid under this Section for students attending  
24 public colleges and universities that offer academic undergraduate degrees at the  
25 baccalaureate level or an amount determined by the administering agency to equal  
26 the weighted average of amounts paid under this Section for students attending  
27 public colleges and universities who are enrolled in the permitted skill or  
28 occupational training, as may be applicable.

1           (2) Notwithstanding any provision of this Section to the contrary, awards  
2           granted pursuant to the provisions of this Section to a first-time freshman who  
3           qualifies for an award pursuant to the provisions of this Section on and after July 1,  
4           2015, and on or before June 30, 2016, shall be calculated as follows:

5           (a) Opportunity Award. (i) For a freshman qualifying for an award pursuant  
6           to Subparagraph (A)(2)(a) of this Section, prior to commencement of the academic  
7           period the student or the student's legal guardian shall pay an amount equal to ten  
8           percent of the net tuition due to the institution attended by the student after  
9           application of any scholarships or other financial assistance received by the student  
10           for the payment of tuition. In accordance with Paragraph (4) of this Subsection, the  
11           administering agency shall pay directly to the institution to which payment is due an  
12           amount equal to the remaining ninety percent of such tuition.

13           (ii)(aa) For a freshman qualifying for an award pursuant to Subparagraph  
14           (A)(2)(b) or Item (A)(5)(b)(i) of this Section, prior to commencement of the  
15           academic period the administering agency shall pay in accordance with Paragraph  
16           (4) of this Subsection directly to the institution to which payment is due an amount  
17           equal to ninety percent of the weighted average of amounts paid under this Section  
18           for students attending public colleges and universities that offer academic  
19           undergraduate degrees at the baccalaureate level or an amount to be determined by  
20           the administering agency to equal the weighted average of amounts paid under this  
21           Section for students attending public colleges and universities who are enrolled in  
22           the permitted skill or occupational training, as may be applicable.

23           (3) Notwithstanding any provision of this Section to the contrary, awards  
24           granted pursuant to the provisions of this Section to persons who qualify for an  
25           award on and after July 1, 2016, shall be calculated as follows:

26           (a) Opportunity Award. (i)(aa) For a freshman qualifying for an award  
27           pursuant to Subparagraph (A)(2)(a) of this Section, prior to commencement of the  
28           academic period the student or the student's legal guardian shall pay an amount equal  
29           to twenty percent of the net tuition due to the institution attended by the student after

1        application of any scholarships or other financial assistance received by the student  
2        for the payment of tuition. In accordance with Paragraph (4) of this Subsection, the  
3        administering agency shall pay directly to the institution to which payment is due an  
4        amount equal to the remaining eighty percent of such tuition.

5                (bb) For a sophomore qualifying for an award pursuant to Subparagraph  
6        (A)(2)(a) of this Section, prior to commencement of the academic period the student  
7        or the student's legal guardian shall pay an amount equal to ten percent of the net  
8        tuition due to the institution attended by the student after application of any  
9        scholarships or other financial assistance received by the student for the payment of  
10       tuition. In accordance with Paragraph (4) of this Subsection, the administering  
11       agency shall pay directly to the institution to which payment is due an amount equal  
12       to the remaining ninety percent of such tuition.

13                (ii)(aa) For a freshman qualifying for an award pursuant to Subparagraph  
14       (A)(2)(b) or Item (A)(5)(b)(i) of this Section, prior to commencement of the  
15       academic period the administering agency shall pay in accordance with Paragraph  
16       (4) of this Subsection directly to the institution to which payment is due an amount  
17       equal to eighty percent of the weighted average of amounts paid under this Section  
18       for students attending public colleges and universities that offer academic  
19       undergraduate degrees at the baccalaureate level or an amount to be determined by  
20       the administering agency to equal the weighted average of amounts paid under this  
21       Section for students attending public colleges and universities who are enrolled in  
22       the permitted skill or occupational training, as may be applicable.

23                (bb) For a sophomore qualifying for an award pursuant to Subparagraph  
24       (A)(2)(a) or Item (A)(5)(b)(i) of this Section, prior to commencement of the  
25       academic period the administering agency shall pay in accordance with Paragraph  
26       (4) of this Subsection directly to the institution to which payment is due an amount  
27       equal to ninety percent of the weighted average of amounts paid under this Section  
28       for students attending public colleges and universities that offer academic  
29       undergraduate degrees at the baccalaureate level or an amount to be determined by

1        the administering agency to equal the weighted average of amounts paid under this  
 2        Section for students attending public colleges and universities who are enrolled in  
 3        the permitted skill or occupational training, as may be applicable.

4                (iii) Juniors and seniors shall receive awards pursuant to Subparagraph (1)(a)  
 5        or (1)(b) of this Subsection, as applicable based on the institution attended.

6                (4) A payment by the administering agency to an institution pursuant to the  
 7        provisions of this Section shall be made directly to the institution to which such  
 8        payment is due after notice to the institution that the state shall pay, on behalf of the  
 9        qualifying student, the applicable amount stipulated in this Subsection and after  
 10       notice from the institution that the student has actually enrolled.

11       Section 2. This Act shall become effective on July 1, 2014; if vetoed by the governor  
 12 and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become effective on July 1,  
 13 2014, or on the day following such approval by the legislature, whichever is later.

#### 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)]

Kleckley

HB No. 1023

**Abstract:** Relative to the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students, provides relative to award amounts, payment of awards, eligibility requirements for awards.

Present law provides relative to the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS). Provides with respect to certain qualifications for participation in the program and provides for scholarship awards and payments of awards.

Present law relative to eligibility requirements to receive a TOPS Opportunity award, requires that students have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.50 and an American College Test (ACT) score equal to the state's average composite score, but never less than 20. Proposed law, effective for students graduating in the 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years, increases requisite grade point average to 2.75 and ACT score to 22 for such an award and for students graduating in the 2020-2021 school year and thereafter, increases requisite grade point average to 3.00 and ACT score to 24 for such an award.

Present law provides for payment at the beginning of the academic period directly to the educational institution on behalf of the student for a TOPS Opportunity award. Provides that Opportunity award recipients enrolled in a public institution or vocational program receive full tuition and Opportunity award recipients enrolled in an independent institution or vocational program receive an amount equal to the weighted average of amounts paid by TOPS for students attending public institutional or vocational schools, as applicable.



Proposed law establishes a new payment schedule and amount for such award.

Effective July 1, 2014.

(Amends R.S. 17:3048.1(A)(1)(b)(i), (2), and (5)(b)(i), and (H)(3)(c); Adds R.S. 17:3048.1(Y))