

SENATE BILL NO. 655

BY SENATOR BUFFINGTON

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 17:3046 and enact R.S. 17:3046.3 and 3048.1(M) and (Y),  
3 relative to financial assistance for certain qualified students; to authorize public or  
4 private entities to make certain donations to various education institutions for  
5 recipients of TOPS awards or GO Grants; to provide for an effective date; and to  
6 provide for related matters.

7 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

8 Section 1. R.S.17:3046 is hereby amended and reenacted and R.S. 17:3046.3 and  
9 3048.1(M) and (Y) are hereby enacted to read as follows:

10 §3046. Louisiana GO Grant program; legislative findings

11 A. The legislature finds that a college education should be available to all  
12 qualified students, regardless of their financial means, and declares that the  
13 Louisiana GO Grant program established by the Board of Regents has enhanced  
14 access to postsecondary educational opportunities for Louisiana students with  
15 demonstrated financial need by providing critically needed assistance to help cover  
16 the cost of attending postsecondary education institutions in the state. The legislature  
17 further finds that leveraging access to postsecondary education for students with  
18 demonstrated financial need ensures that all qualified students are afforded an  
19 opportunity to achieve their full educational potential, increase their overall quality

1 of life, and maximize their contribution to the state's economic development.

2 **B. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Chapter to the contrary,**  
3 **any public or private entity, including any nonprofit organization, may make**  
4 **a directed donation to any eligible postsecondary institution for a student who**  
5 **is a recipient of a Louisiana GO Grant.**

6 \* \* \*

7 **§3046.3. Private Scholarships**

8 **A. Recognizing the success and growth of the Louisiana Go Grant**  
9 **program and in order to maintain the long-term financial stability of the**  
10 **program, private businesses, industry, foundations, charities, individuals and**  
11 **other groups may request from the division of administration that,**  
12 **notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, they may create privately**  
13 **funded scholarship programs to make payments to eligible colleges and**  
14 **universities on behalf of individual students. If the division of administration**  
15 **were to approve a private scholarship program then any scholarship funds**  
16 **received by an eligible college or university from a private scholarship program**  
17 **on behalf of a student shall cause a reduction in the dollar amount of the grant**  
18 **award to the eligible college or university attributable to that student such that**  
19 **the grant award associated with that student shall be an amount that is equal**  
20 **to the dollar amount that the grant would have been if no such private**  
21 **scholarship funds had been received less the amount of private scholarship**  
22 **funds received by the eligible college or university on behalf of that student.**

23 **B. This Section shall in no way be interpreted in such a manner that a**  
24 **student could receive less benefits from a combination of the grants from the**  
25 **program and the private scholarship funded on his behalf then he would have**  
26 **received solely from the grant program if there had been no private scholarship**  
27 **funded on his behalf. Therefore, to the extent that any privately funded**  
28 **scholarship funds provided for in this Section made to an eligible college or**  
29 **university on behalf of a qualified student are for an amount less than the**  
30 **amount a given student would have otherwise received as a grant if no such**

1 private scholarship funds had been paid under this Section and the criteria  
2 established by the Board of Regents, then the eligible college or university shall  
3 receive that difference on behalf of the student as the student's grant from the  
4 Louisiana Go Grant program.

5 C. As provided in this Section, when an eligible college or university  
6 receives privately funded scholarship funds on behalf of a student, the state  
7 funds for the Louisiana Go Grant program shall be reduced by the amount of  
8 the private scholarship program funds so received. The commissioner of  
9 administration shall determine and specify the amount of the reduction from  
10 the source of the funds to provide the maximum benefit to the state from the  
11 privately funded scholarship program. The state treasurer shall deposit the  
12 amount of the reduction as specified by the commissioner of administration into  
13 the Overcollections Fund created in R. S. 39:100.21 and credit the deposit to an  
14 account within the fund hereby established and created to be known as the  
15 "Program Participation Savings Account".

16 \* \* \*

17 §3048.1. Program awards; eligibility; amounts; limitations; funding; administration

18 \* \* \*

19 M. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Chapter to the contrary,  
20 any public or private entity, including any nonprofit organization, may make  
21 a directed donation to any eligible postsecondary institution for a student who  
22 is a recipient of a Louisiana Taylor Opportunity Program for Students award.

23 \* \* \*

24 Y.(1) Recognizing the success and growth of the TOPS program and in  
25 order to maintain the long-term financial stability of the TOPS program,  
26 private businesses, industry, foundations, charities, and other individuals or  
27 groups may request from the division of administration that, notwithstanding  
28 any provision of law to the contrary, they may create scholarship programs to  
29 make payments to eligible colleges and universities on behalf of individual  
30 students. If the division of administration were to approve a private scholarship

1 program then any scholarship funds received by an eligible college or university  
2 from such private scholarship program on behalf of a student shall cause a  
3 reduction in the dollar amount of the TOPS award associated with that student  
4 to an amount that is equal to the dollar amount that the award would have been  
5 if no such private scholarship funds had been received less the amount of  
6 private scholarship funds received by the eligible college or university.

7 (2) This Subsection shall in no way be interpreted in such a manner that  
8 a student could receive less benefits from a combination of the TOPS award  
9 from the program and the private scholarship funded on his behalf then he  
10 would have received solely from the TOPS program if there had been no private  
11 scholarship funded on his behalf. Therefore, to the extent that any privately  
12 funded scholarship funds provided for in this Subsection made to an eligible  
13 college or university on behalf of a qualified student are for an amount less than  
14 the amount a given student would have otherwise received if no such private  
15 scholarship funds had been paid as an award under the TOPS Program, then  
16 the eligible college or university shall receive that difference on behalf of the  
17 student as the student's award from the TOPS program.

18 (3) As provided in this Subsection, when an eligible college or university  
19 receives privately funded scholarship funds on behalf of a student, the state  
20 funds for the TOPS program shall be reduced by the amount of the private  
21 scholarship program funds so received. It is understood and provided that a  
22 reduction shall not effect the estimated nature of the TOPS appropriation as  
23 provided in the act or acts that contain such appropriations. The commissioner  
24 of administration shall determine and specify the amount of the reduction from  
25 the source of the funds to provide the maximum benefit to the state from the  
26 privately funded scholarship program. The state treasurer shall deposit the  
27 amount of such reduction as specified by the commissioner of administration  
28 into the Overcollections Fund created in R.S. 39:100.21 and credit the deposit  
29 to an account within the fund hereby established and created to be known as the  
30 "Program Participation Savings Account".

1           Section 2. This Act shall become effective on July 1, 2014; if vetoed by the governor  
2           and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become effective on July 1,  
3           2014, or on the day following such approval by the legislature, whichever is later.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_