

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 113

BY SENATOR MORRISH

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Louisiana Community and Technical College System, in coordination with the Board of Regents and the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance, to develop a pilot program to provide public postsecondary scholarships to Louisiana's working-age citizens who have earned an alternative high school diploma and who have scored at least a seventeen on the ACT test for use in programs aligned with high-demand, high-pay occupations.

WHEREAS, current data and occupational forecasts indicate that the majority of high-demand, high-pay occupations will require more than a high school education; and

WHEREAS, half of Louisiana's working-age adults have a high school diploma or less, and are lacking the skills and education needed to fully participate in the economy; and

WHEREAS, every effort must be made to provide greater access to postsecondary education to those adults in order to transition them from the rolls of the underemployed or unemployed to the rolls of a skilled workforce who are prepared to meet the current and future workforce needs of the state and who are capable of self-sufficiency; and

WHEREAS, current law provides for the TOPS-Tech program, a merit-based scholarship program for recent high school graduates seeking degrees and credentials that are closely aligned to the needs of business and industry; and

WHEREAS, a scholarship program for adults similar to the TOPS-Tech program may attract and engage more of the working-age population in public postsecondary education; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Community and Technical College System has demonstrated success in outreach to the business community through programs administered through the WISE Fund and success in outreach to adults through the Work Ready-U program; and

WHEREAS, more fully developing a well-educated, highly skilled, and productive workforce is paramount to the economic growth of this state.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Louisiana Community and Technical College System, in coordination with the Board of Regents and the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance, to develop a pilot program to provide public postsecondary scholarships to Louisiana's working-age citizens who have earned an alternative high school diploma and who have scored at least a seventeen on the ACT test for use in programs aligned with high-demand, high-pay occupations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that no additional legislative appropriation shall be requested or provided for the administration of the pilot program, and such program shall be administered utilizing private contributions solicited and collected by Louisiana Community and Technical College system member institutions and foundations, or through the realignment of existing financial aid and scholarship programs.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Louisiana Community and Technical College System shall submit a written report of its findings regarding development and implementation of the pilot program, including any recommendations for related legislation, to the Senate Committee on Education not later than sixty days prior to the beginning of the 2020 Regular Session of the Legislature of Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the president of the Community and Technical College System, the commissioner of higher education, and the executive director of the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE