

2023 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 167

BY REPRESENTATIVES COX AND BEAULLIEU

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

STUDENT/TUITION: Provides for a tuition waiver for certain disabled veterans

1 AN ACT

2 To enact R.S. 17:1688 and 5002(H), relative to tuition and fees at public postsecondary
3 education institutions; to provide for a tuition and fee waiver for certain disabled
4 veterans; to provide for the waiver amount to be calculated after the application of
5 federal benefits; to provide criteria for continuing eligibility and for the maximum
6 duration of the waiver; to provide for certain payments for disabled veterans who
7 also qualify for a Taylor Opportunity Program for Students award; and to provide for
8 related matters.

9 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

10 Section 1. R.S. 17:1688 and 5002(H) are hereby enacted to read as follows:

11 §1688. Disabled veterans; tuition and fee exemption

12 A.(1) A disabled veteran who has enrolled in a program of education
13 approved for educational assistance under 38 U.S.C. 3313 at a public postsecondary
14 education institution and who does not qualify for the one hundred percent eligibility
15 tier shall receive an exemption in an amount equal to the remaining tuition and fees
16 owed to the institution attended after the application of federal benefits under
17 38 U.S.C. 3313.

18 (2) For purposes of this Section, "disabled veteran" means an individual who
19 has a service-connected disability classification of one hundred percent as

1 determined by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and who is a
2 resident of Louisiana.

3 B. In order to be eligible for the exemption, the student shall maintain full-
4 time enrollment and meet the academic standards and comply with the rules and
5 regulations of the institution for enrollment and continued attendance. A student
6 shall be eligible for the exemption for up to ten semesters or an equivalent number
7 of units in an eligible institution which operates on a schedule based on units other
8 than semesters.

9 * * *

10 §5002. Awards and amounts

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12 H. In lieu of the payment of tuition as provided in this Section, any student
13 participating in the program provided by R.S. 17:1688 for disabled veterans shall
14 receive the tuition exemption provided in that Section. In addition to any other
15 payments provided for by the provisions of R.S. 17:1688:

16 (1) For any student who also meets the qualifications provided in this
17 Section for receipt of an Opportunity Award or a TOPS-Tech Award, the state shall
18 pay on behalf of such student a sum of three hundred dollars per semester or six
19 hundred dollars per academic year to be applied toward the cost of books and other
20 instructional materials.

21 (2) For any student who also meets the qualifications provided in this
22 Section for receipt of a Performance Award, the state shall pay on behalf of the
23 student a sum of three hundred dollars per semester or six hundred dollars per
24 academic year to be applied toward the cost of books and other instructional
25 materials plus the sum of four hundred dollars per semester or eight hundred dollars
26 per academic year for other educational expenses as defined by the administering
27 agency.

28 (3) For any student who also meets the qualifications provided in this
29 Section for receipt of an Honors Award, the state shall pay on behalf of the student

1 a sum of three hundred dollars per semester or six hundred dollars per academic year
2 to be applied toward the cost of books and other instructional materials plus the sum
3 of eight hundred dollars per semester or one thousand six hundred dollars per
4 academic year for other educational expenses as defined by the administering
5 agency.

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)]

HB 167 Original

2023 Regular Session

Cox

Abstract: Provides for a tuition and fee waiver for certain disabled veterans.

Proposed law provides that a disabled veteran who does not qualify for the 100% eligibility tier under federal law relative to postsecondary education benefits shall receive an exemption in an amount equal to the remaining tuition and fees owed to the public postsecondary education institution attended after the application of federal benefits. Defines "disabled veteran" as an individual who has a service-connected disability classification of 100% as determined by the U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs and who is a resident of La.

Present law provides for the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS), a program of merit scholarships awarded to students attending certain postsecondary education institutions who meet certain academic and other qualifications. Provides that the award amount for a given institution is equal to the amount of the tuition charged by that institution during the 2016-17 academic year. Proposed law retains present law.

Present law provides for a tuition waiver program for certain individuals serving in the La. National Guard. Provides that in lieu of the tuition payment provided by TOPS, such an individual receives his tuition exemption through the National Guard program but also receives stipends through TOPS for books and other educational expenses, the amount of which is dependent on the TOPS award level for which he qualifies. Proposed law also applies these parameters to the disabled veterans receiving the proposed law tuition waiver.

(Adds R.S. 17:1688 and 5002(H))