

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 678

BY REPRESENTATIVE TURNER

TOPS: Authorizes students who qualify for a TOPS award but graduate from an out-of-state college to apply unused award amounts to medical or dental school in Louisiana and requires repayment unless certain conditions are met

1 AN ACT

2 To enact R.S. 17:5002.1, relative to the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students; to allow
3 certain students who qualify for a program award to apply unused award amounts to
4 medical and dental school under certain circumstances; to require repayment of
5 award amounts under certain circumstances; to require the Board of Regents to
6 provide by rule for collection and exceptions; to provide for applicability; and to
7 provide for related matters.

8 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

9 Section 1. R.S. 17:5002.1 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

10 §5002.1. Medical school; dentistry school

11 A. A student who is determined by the administering agency to be eligible
12 for an Opportunity, Performance, or Honors Award upon high school graduation in
13 accordance with the requirements of this Chapter may apply unused award amounts
14 if enrolled in certain postsecondary education institutions as provided in this Section.

15 B. A student may apply unused award amounts pursuant to this Section if he
16 meets all of the following criteria:

17 (1) He has successfully completed an academic undergraduate degree at the
18 baccalaureate level at a postsecondary education institution outside the state other
19 than an institution provided for in R.S. 17:5027(C). This criterion applies both to

1 students who used part of their award while enrolled at an eligible college or
2 university before transferring to an out-of-state institution and students who never
3 enrolled in an eligible college or university before enrolling in an out-of-state
4 institution.

5 (2) He enrolls in a doctor of medicine, doctor of osteopathic medicine, or
6 doctor of dentistry degree program at a public postsecondary education institution
7 in the state, a regionally accredited independent college or university that is a
8 member of the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, or
9 a campus of the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine in the state during or
10 after the 2025-2026 academic year.

11 (3) He signs a promissory note agreeing to pay the administering agency a
12 sum equal to the amount awarded pursuant to this Section, plus interest, upon
13 graduation or otherwise exiting the program; however, a student shall be exempt
14 from the payment requirement under the following circumstances:

15 (a) The student shall not be required to make the payment for the duration
16 of a residency program.

17 (b) The student shall not be required to make the payment if he practices
18 medicine or dentistry full-time in Louisiana for three consecutive years upon
19 successful completion of the residency program.

20 (c) The student shall not be required to make the payment in accordance with
21 rules promulgated by the administering agency pursuant to Paragraph (F)(2) of this
22 Section.

23 C. The administering agency shall determine how many, if any, of the
24 semesters or equivalent units of an award the student used during undergraduate
25 enrollment and shall apply the unused semesters or equivalent units to the award
26 provided pursuant to this Section, which shall not exceed eight semesters or
27 equivalent units.

28 D. The amount of the award paid pursuant to this Section shall not exceed
29 the amount determined by the administering agency to equal the tuition charged for

1 the medical or dental program or the amount of undergraduate full-time enrollment
2 charged by the highest cost public college or university in the state, whichever is
3 less.

4 E. The student shall be subject to all academic and other requirements
5 provided by this Chapter and by rule of the administering agency for continued
6 receipt of the award applicable to undergraduate students except that such
7 requirements may be modified by the administering agency as necessary to apply
8 such requirements to postgraduate study.

9 F. The administering agency shall promulgate rules necessary to implement
10 the provisions of this Section. Such rules shall include, at a minimum, the following:

11 (1) Provision for all available means of collecting amounts owed and interest
12 on unpaid amounts.

13 (2) Provision for circumstances pursuant to which a student shall be exempt
14 from the payment requirement provided in Paragraph (B)(3) of this Section,
15 including those specified in that Paragraph and any others determined by the
16 administering agency. Such rules shall provide for the definition, verification
17 requirements, and maximum duration of such circumstances.

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 678 Original

2026 Regular Session

Turner

Abstract: Allows students who qualify for TOPS upon high school graduation but graduate from an out-of-state college or university to apply unused award amounts to medical or dental school in La. and requires repayment unless the student satisfies certain criteria.

Present law provides for the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS), a merit scholarship program for students who meet certain academic criteria in high school and other requirements. Allows award recipients who graduate from college early to apply unused award amounts to postgraduate study.

Proposed law retains present law and allows students to apply unused award amounts if they are enrolled in a doctor of medicine, doctor of osteopathic medicine, or doctor of dentistry program in La. during or after the 2025-2026 academic year and have earned an academic baccalaureate degree from an out-of-state college. Applicable to students who qualify for TOPS upon high school graduation regardless of whether they left the state for the entirety

of college or used part of their award at a TOPS-eligible college and then transferred out of state. Requires students to pay a sum equaling award amounts and interest thereon unless they are enrolled in a residency program or they practice medicine or dentistry full-time for three consecutive years in La. after residency. Requires the administering agency (the Bd. of Regents) to provide by rule for collecting unpaid amounts and other excepted circumstances relative to payment.

(Adds R.S. 17:5002.1)