

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1021

BY REPRESENTATIVE EGAN

TOPS: Provides relative to repayment of certain TOPS award amounts under certain circumstances

1 AN ACT

2 To enact R.S. 17:5004, relative to the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students; to require
3 certain program award recipients to repay award amounts under certain
4 circumstances; to exempt students who meet certain criteria from this requirement;
5 to require the Board of Regents to promulgate rules for means of collection and
6 exceptions; to provide relative to applicability; and to provide for related matters.

7 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

8 Section 1. R.S. 17:5004 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

9 §5004. Repayment; exceptions; rules

10 A. Except as otherwise provided in this Section, a student who receives an
11 Opportunity, Performance, Honors, or Excellence award shall repay the award
12 amount that was paid on his behalf to a postsecondary education institution for his
13 first academic year of enrollment if his award is canceled for failure to meet
14 requirements for maintaining eligibility as provided in R.S. 17:5041, if he resigns
15 from the institution, or if he fails to complete a baccalaureate degree by the end of
16 the spring semester of his fifth academic year of enrollment. Nothing in this
17 Subsection shall be construed to provide for payment of such an award for more than
18 eight semesters unless an extension is granted as provided in R.S. 17:5002(E)(1).

19 B.(1) A student is exempt from the repayment requirement in Subsection A
20 of this Section if he enrolls at an institution under the supervision and management

1 of the Board of Supervisors of Community and Technical Colleges, referred to in this
2 Section as "the board of supervisors", and meets all of the following criteria:

3 (a) He enrolls in an eligible program within twelve months of the last date
4 of his enrollment at the baccalaureate degree-granting institution.

5 (b) He enrolls for at least six credit hours per semester or an equivalent
6 number of clock hours as defined in 34 CFR 600.2, as determined by the board of
7 supervisors, in a workforce training program.

8 (c) He successfully completes the eligible program in no more than thirty-six
9 months.

10 (2) For purposes of this Subsection, "eligible program" means a program that
11 results in industry-based certifications, technical diplomas, certificates of applied
12 science, or associate degrees that align with workforce demand as determined by the
13 administering agency.

14 C. The administering agency shall promulgate rules for the implementation
15 of the provisions of this Section that shall include, at a minimum, the following:

16 (1)(a) Provision for circumstances under which a student shall be exempt
17 from the repayment requirement in Subsection A of this Section even if he does not
18 meet the criteria provided for in Subsection B of this Section.

19 (b) Provision for circumstances under which a student may be required to
20 repay a partial amount instead of the full award amount paid on his behalf to a
21 postsecondary education institution for his first academic year of enrollment.

22 (2) Provision for all available means of collecting amounts owed and interest
23 on unpaid amounts.

24 D. The administering agency shall submit a written report to the House
25 Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education not later than
26 December first annually that includes the number of Opportunity, Performance,
27 Honors, or Excellence award recipients who do not complete a baccalaureate degree
28 by the end of the spring semester of their fifth year of enrollment, the number of such
29 students who then enroll in an institution under the supervision and management of

1 the board of supervisors as provided in Subsection B of this Section, the degrees or
 2 other credentials earned by such students at such institutions, repayment outcomes,
 3 and any available workforce outcomes. The administering agency may incorporate
 4 this report into the report required by R.S. 17:5067.

5 E. The provisions of this Section shall apply to students who graduate from
 6 high school during or after the 2025-2026 school year.

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 1021 Original

2026 Regular Session

Egan

Abstract: Requires repayment of a Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) award under certain circumstances.

Present law provides for TOPS, a merit scholarship program for students attending certain postsecondary education institutions who meet specific academic criteria and other requirements. Provides that the administering agency for the program is the Bd. of Regents. Proposed law retains present law.

Proposed law, applicable to students who graduate from high school during or after the 2025-2026 school year, requires a student who initially qualifies for an Opportunity, Performance, Honors, or Excellence award to repay the award amount paid on his behalf to a postsecondary education institution during his first academic year of enrollment if his award is canceled for failure to meet present law requirements for maintaining eligibility, if he resigns from the institution, or if he fails to complete a baccalaureate degree by the end of the spring semester of his fifth academic year of enrollment. Provides that nothing in proposed law shall be construed to provide for payment of an award for more than eight semesters unless an extension is granted as authorized in present law.

Proposed law exempts a student from this repayment requirement if he enrolls at an institution under the supervision and management of the Bd. of Supervisors of Community and Technical Colleges and meets all of the following criteria:

- (1) He enrolls in an eligible program within 12 months of the last date of enrollment at the baccalaureate degree-granting institution. (Proposed law defines "eligible program" as a program that results in industry-based certifications, technical diplomas, certificates of applied science, or associate degrees that align with workforce demand as determined by the Bd. of Regents.)
- (2) He enrolls for at least six credit hours per semester or an equivalent number of "clock hours" (as defined in federal regulations), as determined by the board of supervisors, in a workforce training program.
- (3) He successfully completes the eligible program in no more than 36 months.

Proposed law requires the Bd. of Regents to promulgate rules for proposed law implementation that shall include, at a minimum, the following:

- (1) Provision for circumstances under which a student shall be exempt from the repayment requirement even he does not meet the proposed law exemption criteria.
- (2) Provision for circumstances under which a student may be required to repay a partial amount instead of the full award amount paid on his behalf for his first year of enrollment.
- (3) Provision for all available means of collecting amounts owed and interest on unpaid amounts.

Proposed law requires the Bd. of Regents to submit a written report to the House and Senate education committees by Dec. first annually that includes the number of Opportunity, Performance, Honors, or Excellence award recipients who do not complete a baccalaureate degree by the end of the spring semester of their fifth year of enrollment, the number of such students who then enroll in a community or technical college as provided in proposed law, the degrees or other credentials earned by such students, repayment outcomes, and any available workforce outcomes.

Present law requires the Bd. of Regents to submit a report by Dec. first annually on specified aspects of TOPS to the House and Senate education committees. Proposed law allows the board to incorporate the proposed law report into the present law report.

(Adds R.S. 17:5004)