

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 385

BY REPRESENTATIVE BAMBURG

TOPS: Provides, under specified circumstances, for repayment of a Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) award

1 AN ACT

2 To enact R.S. 17:5004, relative to the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students; to require  
3 program award recipients to repay award amounts under certain circumstances; to  
4 require the Board of Regents to promulgate rules relative to repayment; to require  
5 that these rules provide for means of collection and for specified exceptions; to  
6 provide relative to applicability; to provide for exceptions; and to provide for related  
7 matters.

8 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

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

10 §5004. Repayment; rules

11 A.(1) Except as provided in Paragraph (2) of this Subsection, a student shall  
12 repay award amounts paid to a postsecondary education institution on his behalf if  
13 his award is suspended or canceled for failure to meet requirements for maintaining  
14 eligibility as provided in R.S. 17:5041 and 5042.

15 (2) The following students are exempt from the repayment requirement in  
16 Paragraph (1) of this Subsection:

17 (a) A student who initially qualified for an Honors or Excellence award.

18 (b) A student who enrolls during the same semester as the suspension or  
19 cancellation or the semester immediately following the suspension or cancellation  
20 at an institution under the supervision and management of the Board of Supervisors

1 of Community and Technical Colleges in a high-wage, high-demand program  
2 determined to be a "qualified program" as provided in R.S. 17:3047.1.

3 B. The administering agency shall promulgate rules necessary to implement  
4 the provisions of this Section. Such rules shall include the following:

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

7 (2) Provision for circumstances under which a student shall be excepted from  
8 the repayment requirement in Paragraph (A)(1) of this Section in addition to the  
9 exceptions provided in Paragraph (A)(2) of this Section. Such rules shall provide for  
10 the definition, certification requirements, and maximum duration of such  
11 circumstances, which shall be limited to the following:

12 (a) Parental leave.

13 (b) Physical rehabilitation program.

14 (c) Substance abuse rehabilitation program.

15 (d) Temporary disability.

16 (e) Permanent disability.

17 (f) Exceptional educational opportunity.

18 (g) Religious commitment.

19 (h) Death of immediate family.

20 (i) Military service.

21 (j) Transfer to a selective enrollment program.

22 (k) Unavailability of courses.

23 (l) Natural disaster.

24 (m) Exceptional circumstances.

25 C. The provisions of this Section shall apply to students who graduate from  
26 high school during or after the 2025-2026 school year.

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**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)]

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HB 385 Engrossed

2026 Regular Session

Bamburg

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

Present law provides for the TOPS program of merit scholarships for students attending certain postsecondary education institutions who meet specific academic criteria and other requirements. Once enrolled in college, requires that students meet certain requirements in order to maintain continued eligibility. Such requirements include but are not limited to making steady academic progress while earning enough credits to maintain full-time status, maintaining a minimum required grade point average, and having no criminal conviction except for misdemeanor traffic violations.

Proposed law, applicable to students who graduate from high school during or after the 2025-2026 school year, requires a student to repay award amounts paid to a postsecondary education institution on his behalf if his award is suspended or canceled for failure to meet the requirements for maintaining eligibility. Exempts the following students from the repayment requirement:

- (1) A student who initially qualified for an Honors or Excellence award.
- (2) A student who enrolls during or immediately following the semester of the suspension or cancellation or at an institution under the supervision and management of the Bd. of Supervisors of Community and Technical Colleges in a high-wage, high-demand program determined to be a "qualified program" as provided in present law.

Proposed law requires the administering agency (Bd. of Regents) to promulgate rules necessary to implement proposed law, including provisions for the following:

- (1) Collecting amounts owed and interest on unpaid amounts.
- (2) Circumstances under which a student shall be excepted from proposed law repayment requirement in addition to those provided above; requires that these rules provide for the definition, certification requirements, and maximum duration of these circumstances, which shall be limited to the following exceptions:
  - (a) Parental leave.
  - (b) Physical rehabilitation program.
  - (c) Substance abuse rehabilitation program.
  - (d) Temporary disability.
  - (e) Permanent disability.
  - (f) Exceptional educational opportunity.
  - (g) Religious commitment.

- (h) Death of immediate family.
- (i) Military service.
- (j) Transfer to a selective enrollment program.
- (k) Unavailability of courses.
- (l) Natural disaster.
- (m) Exceptional circumstances in addition to the proposed law exceptions.

(Adds R.S. 17:5004)

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Education to the original bill:

1. Exempt the following students from the repayment requirement:
  - (a) A student who initially qualified for an Honors or Excellence award.
  - (b) A student who enrolls during or immediately following the semester of the suspension or cancellation at an institution under the supervision and management of the Bd. of Supervisors of Community and Technical Colleges in certain high-wage, high-demand programs.