
DIGEST

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Greene

HB No. 710

Abstract: Permits use of TOPS awards to pursue certain postgraduate academic degrees at eligible La. institutions by otherwise qualified students who enroll as first-time students in and graduate from out-of-state colleges or universities.

Proposed law, relative to the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS), adds that notwithstanding present law to the contrary, an otherwise qualified student who meets each of the following conditions and who first enrolls as a full-time student in an out-of-state college or university and remains in and graduates from an out-of-state college or university may use the program award to pursue a postgraduate academic degree in a field of study that qualifies the student for employment in a four or five star job as defined by the La. Workforce Commission at an eligible institution if the student continues to meet all academic and other requirements for continued receipt of the award as an undergraduate except as such requirements are modified by the administering agency to apply to postgraduate study:

- (1) The student meets the initial eligibility requirements for an Opportunity, Performance, or Honors award.
- (2) The student graduated from an out-of-state college or university accredited by a regional accrediting organization recognized by the U.S. Dept. of Education.
- (3) While enrolled in such an out-of-state college or university, the student met all requirements that would have been applicable to such student for continuation of the initial award if the student had enrolled in an eligible La. college or university.
- (4) The student graduated from high school during the 2008-2009 school year or thereafter.

Provides that the amount of the tuition award shall not exceed the amounts determined by the administering agency to equal the tuition charged for the postgraduate study or for undergraduate full-time enrollment charged by the highest cost public college university in the state, whichever is less. Permits the student to receive the award for the number of semesters authorized by present law (no more than eight semesters or its equivalent), as reduced pursuant to present law. Provides that the student shall remain eligible to receive the award if, during his enrollment in the postgraduate degree program, the four or five star job is no longer defined as such.

Effective upon signature of governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Adds R.S. 17:3048.1(Y))