
HOUSE COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS

2015 Regular Session

Substitute for Original House Bill No. 708 by Representative Hunter as proposed by the House Committee on Education

This document reflects the content of a substitute bill but is not in a bill form; page numbers in this document DO NOT correspond to page numbers in the substitute bill itself.

To enact R.S. 17:3048.8, relative to the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students; to establish a scholarship program for students who have left high school without completing a degree; to provide relative to eligibility, limitations, and administration of the program; and to provide for related matters.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

Section 1. R.S. 17:3048.8 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

§3048.8. TOPS-Tech Second Chance Award; purpose; eligibility; limitations; administration; implementation

A. The TOPS-Tech Second Chance Award is hereby established as part of the Louisiana Taylor Opportunity Program for Students for eligible persons as provided in this Section. The award program is established as a pilot program in any parish having a population of between one hundred forty thousand and one hundred ninety thousand as of the most recent federal decennial census. To be eligible for an award pursuant to this Section, the person shall be a resident of such a parish and enroll in a program or institution within the parish.

B.(1) A TOPS-Tech Second Chance Award may be used for any program that will assist the person to complete a high school degree or to prepare for the HiSET exam and, for a person who completes a high school degree or passes the HiSET exam, to fund any technical or applied course leading to an Industry-Based Certification, a Certificate of Applied Science, and a Certificate of Technical Sciences offered at a Louisiana public or nonpublic postsecondary education institution or by any Louisiana training provider recognized by the Louisiana Workforce Commission and approved by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education as provided in Paragraph (4) of this Subsection when such

certification or certificate is approved by the Workforce Investment Council as meeting the following requirements:

(a) Is identified by the Occupation Forecasting Conference as a credential for an occupation in top demand in Louisiana.

(b) Is recognized by the State Industry-Based Certification Leadership Council.

(2) An eligible recipient may receive a TOPS-Tech Second Chance Award for one year leading up to a high school diploma or passing the HiSET exam and two semesters of study at a public postsecondary education institution thereafter if he completes the high school diploma or passes the exam.

(3) The administering agency, on behalf of a TOPS-Tech Second Chance Award recipient, shall pay to the institution or program in which the award recipient is enrolled an amount determined by the agency to be the equivalent of the cost.

(4) By January thirty-first annually, the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education shall determine which training program providers it approves for the academic year that begins in the fall of that year.

C.(1) An application for a TOPS-Tech Second Chance Award shall be required at a time and in a manner and form established by the administering agency.

(2) Information regarding the TOPS-Tech Second Chance Award shall be made available by the administering agency on its website.

D. To be eligible for an initial TOPS-Tech Second Chance Award, a person shall meet each of the following conditions and comply with other applicable provisions of this Section and administering agency rules:

(1) Have left high school without graduating.

(2) Have prepared an education and career plan that sets a course for completion of high school or passing the HiSET and attainment of a training credential in accordance with this Section.

E.(1) The provisions of this Section shall be administered by the Louisiana Student Financial Assistance Commission, referred to in this Section as the "administering agency". Except as otherwise provided by this Section, the authority

granted to and limitations placed on the administering agency by R.S. 17:3048.1 relative to administering other awards pursuant to the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students shall be deemed to apply also to the administration of the TOPS-Tech Second Chance Award. However, R.S. 17:3048.1(A)(1)(g) shall not be applied as a criterion for receipt of an award pursuant to this Section.

(2) The agency shall adopt, in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, rules to implement and administer the provisions of this Section. Such rules shall include but not be limited to necessary guidelines, policies, procedures, forms, and time lines.

F. No award shall be made pursuant to this Section after July 1, 2019.

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 Draft

2015 Regular Session

Abstract: Establishes the TOPS-Tech Second Chance Award as a pilot program in certain parishes to assist persons to complete a high school degree or equivalency exam and to pursue a training certificate.

Proposed law creates a pilot TOPS program in certain parishes known as the TOPS-Tech Second Chance Award. The award may be used to pay the cost of any program that will assist the award recipient to complete a high school degree or to prepare for the HiSET exam and, for a person who completes a high school degree or passes the HiSET exam, to fund any technical or applied course leading to an Industry-Based Certification, a Certificate of Applied Science, and a Certificate of Technical Sciences offered at a La. public or nonpublic postsecondary education institution or by any La. training provider recognized by the La. Workforce Commission and approved by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education if such certification or certificate is approved by the Workforce Investment Council as meeting specified criteria.

Proposed law provides that an eligible recipient may receive a TOPS-Tech Second Chance Award for one year leading up to a high school diploma or passing the HiSET exam and two semesters of study at a public postsecondary education institution thereafter if he completes the high school diploma or passes the exam.

Proposed law provides that to be eligible for an initial TOPS-Tech Second Chance Award, a person shall have left high school without graduating and shall have prepared an education and career plan that sets a course for completion of high school or passing the HiSET and attainment of a training credential in accordance with proposed law. Generally, also requires a person to meet other TOPS eligibility requirements, except provides that the prohibition on persons convicted of felonies or dishonorably discharged from the military does not apply to the program.

Proposed law provides that no award shall be made pursuant to this Section after July 1, 2019.

(Adds R.S. 17:3048.8)