

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 186

BY REPRESENTATIVE MELERINE

CRIME/THEFT: Creates the crime of theft of funds from the Louisiana Giving All True Opportunity to Rise (LA GATOR) Scholarship Program

1 AN ACT

2 To enact R.S. 14:67.8, relative to misappropriation without violence; to create the crime of
3 theft of LA Gator scholarship program funds; to provide for penalties; to provide for
4 restitution; and to provide for related matters.

5 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

6 Section 1. R.S. 14:67.8 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

7 §67.8. Theft of Louisiana Giving All True Opportunity to Rise (LA GATOR)
8 Scholarship Program funds; penalties; restitution

9 A. No person shall intentionally misuse any account funds, as defined in R.S.
10 17:4037.3, associated with the LA GATOR Scholarship Program for any purpose not
11 provided in Chapter 43-C of Title 17 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950.

12 B.(1) Whoever violates the provisions of this Section when the
13 misappropriation or taking amounts to twenty-five thousand dollars or more shall be
14 imprisoned at hard labor for not more than twenty years, fined not more than fifty
15 thousand dollars, or both.

16 (2) When the misappropriation or taking amounts to five thousand dollars
17 or more, but less than twenty-five thousand dollars, the offender shall be imprisoned
18 with or without hard labor for not more than ten years, fined not more than ten
19 thousand dollars, or both.

1 (3) When the misappropriation or taking amounts to one thousand dollars or
2 more, but less than five thousand dollars, the offender shall be imprisoned with or
3 without hard labor for not more than five years, fined not more than three thousand
4 dollars, or both.

5 (4)(a) When the misappropriation or taking amounts to less than one
6 thousand dollars, the offender shall be imprisoned for not more than six months,
7 fined not more than one thousand dollars, or both.

8 (b) If the offender in violation of Subparagraph (a) of this Paragraph has
9 been previously convicted of theft two or more times, upon any subsequent
10 conviction, the offender shall be imprisoned with or without hard labor for not more
11 than two years, fined not more than two thousand dollars, or both.

12 (5) In addition to the penalties provided in Paragraphs (1) through (4) of this
13 Subsection, a person convicted pursuant to the provisions of this Section shall be
14 ordered to make full restitution to the victim and any other person who has suffered
15 a financial loss as a result of the offense in accordance with Code of Criminal
16 Procedure Article 883.2.

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 186 Original

2026 Regular Session

Melerine

Abstract: Creates the crime of theft of funds from the LA GATOR Scholarship Program.

Proposed law creates the crime of theft of LA GATOR Scholarship Program funds and provides that this offense is the intentional misuse of any account funds associated with the LA GATOR Scholarship Program for any purpose not provided in present law (R.S. 17:4037.1 et seq.).

Proposed law provides for penalties when the misappropriation or taking amounts to a value as follows:

- (1) \$25,000 or more, imprisonment at hard labor for not more than 20 years, a fine of not more than \$50,000, or both.
- (2) \$5,000 or more but less than \$25,000, imprisonment with or without hard labor for not more than 10 years, a fine of not more than \$10,000, or both.

- (3) \$1,000 or more but less than \$5,000, imprisonment with or without hard labor for not more than five years, a fine of not more than \$3,000, or both.
- (4) Less than \$1,000, imprisonment for not more than six months, a fine of not more than \$1,000, or both.

Proposed law further provides for a penalty consisting of imprisonment with or without hard labor for not more than two years, a fine of not more than \$2,000, or both, for an offender who violates proposed law relative to an amount of less than \$1,000 and has two or more previous convictions for theft involving an amount of less than \$1,000.

Proposed law requires the offender to pay full restitution in accordance with present law (C.Cr.P. Art. 883.2) to the victim and any other person who has suffered a financial loss as a result of the offense.

(Adds R.S. 14:67.8)