



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **SENATOR BISHOP APPOINTED TO TOPS TASK FORCE**

District 4 State Senator Wesley Bishop has been selected to serve on the newly created TOPS Task Force. The 10-member committee was created during the 2017 Regular Legislative Session to review the history of the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students and develop a plan to ensure the program's long-term viability.

"I am thrilled to be a part of this important project," said Senator Bishop. "There have been many ideas and attempts to change the TOPS program. This task force will give us the opportunity to review those ideas and develop a plan that will ensure that TOPS is available for our students for years to come."

Senator Dan Morrish, chairman of the Senate Committee on Education, appointed Senator Bishop to the task force. In making the appointment, Morrish considered Bishop's experience as Associate Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs at Southern University at New Orleans as well as his legislative background and passion for higher education.

"Senator Bishop, building on his academic background, continues to be a strong voice for higher education in the Louisiana Senate," said Senator Morrish. "I am excited to begin working with him as we review the TOPS program."

TOPS scholarships pay tuition and certain fees for Louisiana residents attending in-state colleges and universities. About 52,000 students get TOPS, which has been in effect since 1998. For the first time in the program's history, recipients did not get the full tuition award for the 2016-17 college year because of state budget problems. In response, the legislature approved Morrish's Senate Concurrent Resolution (SCR) 110. SCR 110 created the task force to study the program's purpose and history, role in relation to tuition and fees, and ways to ensure the program's long-term viability. Its first meeting is set to be held September 7, 2017.

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