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CONTACT: SENATOR FIELDS

PHONE: (225) 342-9514

**SENATOR FIELDS FILES MEASURE TO CLARIFY PROCESS OF
APPROPRIATING STATE FUNDS TO UNIVERSITIES**

District 14 State Senator Cleo Fields (D - Baton Rouge) has filed legislation to clarify budgetary appropriations to postsecondary management boards in state law. The bill reaffirms the role that the Board of Regents, management boards and the legislature play in appropriating funds to universities, regardless of admission policies.

Senate Bill 76 would clarify that the Louisiana Board of Regents has the constitutional authority to adopt a funding formula that provides for the equitable distribution of state funds. That formula shall then be submitted to the legislature. The legislature, and legislature alone, has the authority to appropriate money directly to the various higher education management boards. The bill would also prevent the Board of Regents from financially penalizing institutions that do not adopt board admission standards.

“When it comes to the appropriation of state funds to Louisiana’s higher education institutions, the Board of Regents has the constitutional authority to adopt a funding formula and advise the legislature on how it makes allocations,” said Fields, Chairman of the Senate Education Committee. “Their responsibility of establishing a master plan and funding mechanism is meant to assist and make recommendations, not appropriations. The Board of Regents is an appointed board of the executive branch and does not have appropriation authority.”

Fields said the bill is necessary in light of the Board of Regents’ recent decision to add financial penalties for universities that do not comply with its adopted admission standards. *Article VIII, Section 12 of the Louisiana State Constitution* states, “Appropriations for the institutions of higher education SHALL be made to their managing boards. The funds appropriated shall be administered by the managing boards and used solely as provided by law.”

“The Board does not have the constitutional authority to appropriate state funds or take funds away from an institution, regardless of admission standards and this bill will make that clear,” added Fields.

The 2020 Regular Legislative Session is scheduled to convene at noon on March 9, 2020. To view SB 76 and Fields’ other bills, please visit www.legis.la.gov.

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