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Louisiana Budget Project

Removing Barriers to Work Act

*Louisianans who default on their student loans are at risk of having their professional licenses revoked under current state law. **HB 423 by Rep. Julie Emerson** is a bill to repeal this provision. Support of this bill will protect occupational licensing, and ensure that those with student loans have the ability to pay those loans back and make a living in their respective fields.*

State of Louisiana Student Debt

- Louisiana's borrowers now owe **\$20.4 billion** in student loan debt, an increase of nearly \$1.5 billion in just 12 months
- In 2017, **48 percent** of four-year students in Louisiana graduated with debt, and the average amount of debt for these graduates was **\$27,210**.¹
- Student debt in Louisiana increased **126 percent** from 2008 to 2018.
- By 2023, nearly 40 percent of students across the nation are expected to default on their student loans.

Cost of College Attendance

- Average tuition and fees at a public four-year university in Louisiana accounted for **32 percent** of median household income for Black families, **23 percent** for Hispanic families, and **16 percent** for white families in 2017.
- Since 2008, state appropriations for higher education per student has declined by **40.6 percent**.
- Tuition has increased by **105.4 percent** since 2008, rising \$4,773 per student. Average tuition at a four-year Louisiana public university is now \$9,302 a year.²

Louisianans risk losing their livelihood

- Some examples of Louisianans who could be affected by the law are teachers, nurses, social workers, lawyers, and barbers. In 2017 Louisiana revoked or failed to renew 87 nurses' professional licenses, due to student debt.³
- A person who loses their main source of income will find it nearly impossible to pay back their student loans. It's time to end this harsh provision and instead help get students strapped with loan debt back on their feet.

¹ https://ticas.org/sites/default/files/pub_files/classof2017.pdf

² <https://www.cbpp.org/research/state-budget-and-tax/unkept-promises-state-cuts-to-higher-education-threaten-access-and>

³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/18/business/student-loans-licenses.html>