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## Recognition of Homeschool Diploma

**Senate Bill 798: Home Study Diploma Bill      Sponsors: Senator Michael A. Walsworth**

### **Summary:**

Senate Bill 798 was introduced to ensure that a diploma issued by an approved home study program would be recognized by colleges, universities, trade schools and other governmental entities. Under the bill a diploma issued by an approved home study program must be given the same rights and privileges afforded a high school diploma awarded by a state-approved nonpublic school.

Most colleges and universities in Louisiana have been accepting homeschool graduates on behalf of their homeschool diploma and transcripts. Home study graduates who had been in an approved home study program no later than the end of the 10th grade and meet the minimum scores required on the ACT are eligible for TOPS awards. However, in recent years homeschool graduates had been having some difficulties with trade schools, like cosmetology schools, and certain civil service jobs.

Due to these difficulties a bill was drafted with the help of CHEF of LA, several homeschool leaders and family oriented groups, as well as HSLDA. Senator Walsworth agreed to sponsor the bill.

**HSLDA's Position: Support**

**Action Requested: None at this time**

**Status: Signed by Governor Bobby Jindal on June 29, 2010 and effective as of August 15, 2010.**

### **Background:**

HSLDA has worked to defend the right of parents to self-certify the completion of their homeschool student's high school education. Both Congress and the U.S. Department of Education recognize the right of parents to provide verification that their student has completed high school through a homeschool program. However, occasional discrimination still comes up for homeschool graduates who are often told they must obtain a GED in order to be accepted into college or employment.

Because of the difficulties with various trade schools in Louisiana, most of whom only require a 10th grade education to be admitted, and other areas involving governmental entities, it was decided that legislation was needed to address this issue. Since home study students must seek the approval of the Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (SBESE) Senate Bill 798 was drafted to treat their diplomas as any other state-approved nonpublic school diploma. While not all homeschool graduates go through the home study program and instead complete their high school education in a registered nonpublic school (not seeking state approval), this bill is a step in the right direction.

With the bill facing some opposition, HSLDA legal assistant Eric Johnson returned to his home state to help testify on behalf of Senate Bill 798. Eric was well suited to testify as he is a homeschool graduate from Louisiana and had served honorably for several years in the U.S. Marines. However, when he applied for a position with a local law enforcement agency, he was turned down simply because he was homeschooled.

Now that Senate Bill 798 has passed we expect home study graduates will find the doors to trade schools and civil service positions wide open.