



Celebrating 40 Years
1969 - 2009

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Edward Kealy, Executive Director
Committee for Education Funding

March 2, 2009

Dear Majority Leader Reid:

The Committee for Education Funding (CEF), a nonpartisan coalition of more than 90 education organizations reflecting the broad spectrum of the education community, strongly supports the FY09 omnibus bill that provides funding increases for many critical education programs, especially those that were not included in the recently passed economic recovery package. CEF applauds the House for rejecting the previous administration's inadequate and harmful budget request that would cut funding for many education programs when accounting for inflation and enrollment growth. The bill also provides the base funding for many of the provisions included in the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act*.

The omnibus package provides much needed relief to programs that have been neglected in the past and restores funding for programs that were slated for elimination. The bill increases funding for the TRIO and GEAR UP programs, which help prepare nearly 900,000 disadvantaged students to enter and complete higher education. It will provide additional funding for our nation's library system and public television stations, which are struggling because of the economic downturn. The bill also helps programs that support elementary and secondary school counselors, social workers, and psychologists who provide essential services to students during times of crisis and who are facing job losses of their own because of state budget cuts.

The bill would restore funding for Career and Technical Education programs, helping meet President Obama's challenge for every American to return to school for at least one year. It also provides additional support for the Pell Grant program, which will ensure 6.9 million students can pay for their education and aid displaced workers returning to school.

In 1975, the federal government spent five cents of every federal dollar on education and training. The federal commitment in 2008 was 2.8 cents. The funds provided in the omnibus bill and economic recovery package combined, take an unprecedented step towards restoring the nation's commitment to education funding. Congress must make education funding a top priority to ensure the success of America's students. When our students succeed, our nation succeeds!

Sincerely,

Deborah Rigsby
President

Edward R. Kealy, Ph.D.
Executive Director