

AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

September 16, 2009

U.S House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Re: H.R. 3221, the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act

Dear Representative:

I write on behalf of the associations listed below regarding H.R. 3221, the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act—legislation that builds on past congressional efforts to expand access to college for students with the talent and desire to follow their dreams. H.R. 3221 contains a number of provisions that will benefit students, such as setting aside mandatory funding to supplement the Pell Grant maximum grant award over the next 10 years, streamlining the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, broadening access to Perkins Loans, and keeping subsidized student loans affordable in future years by modifying the interest rate increase scheduled to take effect in 2012.

H.R. 3221 also establishes the American Graduation Initiative, designed to recognize and reward the central role that community colleges play in postsecondary education and work force preparation. This initiative is a critical part of President Obama's goal that by 2020, America will once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world. In addition, the bill also provides funding for Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-Serving Institutions and Tribal Colleges to ensure they do not suffer a funding cut because of the expiration of the initiative authorized under the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007. All of these initiatives will contribute toward strengthening America's future economic vitality.

While the bill includes a number of initiatives that we support, there are several provisions that represent a marked departure from federal policy and practice in ways that are potentially troublesome. We continue to have serious concerns about provisions in Section 782 and Section 504 that threaten the balance of the current partnership between institutions, states and the federal government. We greatly appreciate the inclusion in the bill of the "rule of construction" language for private institutions and ask that you continue to work with us to address concerns that remain for public institutions. While we appreciate the bill provisions broadening the Perkins Loan program, we ask for your support going forward to ensure that our campuses will be able to transition to the new program smoothly and with a minimum of disruption in service to their students. We do not wish to impede the progress of this bill or stand in the way of its passage, but we hope to address these issues as the legislation moves toward its eventual enactment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Molly Corbett Broad".

Molly Corbett Broad
President

MCB/ldw

On behalf of:

American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Association of University Professors
American Council on Education
American Dental Education Association
American Indian Higher Education Consortium
APPA
Association of American Colleges and Universities
Association of American Universities
Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Association of Research Libraries
Council for Higher Education Accreditation
EDUCAUSE
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
National Association of College and University Business Officers
National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education
University Continuing Education Association