

AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

February 7, 2008

U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

I write on behalf of the higher education associations listed below in strong support of Representative Howard "Buck" McKeon's amendment to H.R. 4137, the College Opportunity and Affordability Act of 2007. The McKeon amendment calls for a study of all federal regulations and reporting requirements that affect colleges and universities.

Colleges and universities are among the most heavily regulated entities in America – as educational institutions, research institutions, employers, charitable organizations, and Internet service providers, among others. With the exception of the Consumer Product Safety Commission, each and every other federal agency is involved in regulating some aspect of higher education. In regard to the Department of Education, H.R. 4137 will add a wide variety of new requirements, roughly 200 at last count, to the hundreds of current regulations.

While much federal regulation is worthwhile and appropriate, it does not come for free. In most instances, federal regulations are actually unfunded mandates that increase the operating costs of colleges and universities. The 1998 report of the National Commission on the Cost of Higher Education and the Spellings Commission Report of 2006 recognized the increasing regulatory burden that colleges and universities are forced to bear and each recommended streamlining and eliminating regulations.

Rep. McKeon's proposal to study the link between increases in tuition and increases in regulatory requirements is long overdue. The amendment he offers today would require the National Research Council to study the number and scope of all federal regulations and reporting requirements with which colleges and universities must comply; estimate compliance costs; and make recommendations for consolidating, streamlining, and eliminating redundant and burdensome regulations. We urge you to vote in favor of this amendment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Ward", is written in a cursive style.

David Ward  
President

DW\ksm

On behalf of:

American Association of Community Colleges

American Association of State Colleges and Universities

American Council on Education

Association of American Universities

Association of Community College Trustees

Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities

Council on Governmental Relations

National Association of College and University Business Officers

National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities

National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges

National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators