



American Council on Education
Office of the President

July 23, 2007

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

I write on behalf of the higher education associations listed below to convey our strong support for S. 1642, the Higher Education Amendments of 2007. This reauthorization bill is an authentic bipartisan accomplishment that has taken several years to come to fruition. The many contributions it makes toward strengthening and improving American higher education reflect input from all of the members of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. We wish especially to commend the chairman, Senator Kennedy, and ranking member, Senator Enzi, and their staffs for shaping the bill around their recognition that America's ability to compete in the global marketplace rests substantially on its vibrant and diverse system of higher education.

Since the 1970's, the guiding vision for the federal role in higher education has been to provide an equal educational opportunity for all those who aspire to college regardless of their means or economic status—this is the reason why the need-based federal student aid programs in the Higher Education Act are centered on students, rather than on aid to institutions. As we move steadily into the 21st Century, the importance of this compact between the federal government and America's college students remains as essential now as it has ever been and S 1642, coupled with the passage of the Higher Education Access Act last week, preserves and enhances this relationship.

As leaders of American higher education, we recognize that college attendance is a function of several different things: students must understand the value of higher education, have adequate information about appropriate educational programs, receive adequate academic preparation to enroll and succeed in higher education, and obtain the financial resources to participate. We believe the federal government has an important role to play in all of these areas and in making a college education more accessible to more students, and S. 1642 makes important contributions in this regard.

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We support S. 1642 as it has been brought to the floor by Senators Kennedy and Enzi. We respectfully urge its passage. We strongly support the manager's amendment language on higher education accreditation, which will protect the public's interest in high quality higher education, and will do so without allowing the Secretary of Education to manage the day-to-day activities of the accrediting agencies. However, we will remain actively engaged in the consideration of the amendments offered during its consideration, and will vigorously oppose those that would harm higher education institutions and the students who attend them.

Sincerely,



David Ward
President

DW/mmn

On behalf of:

Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American Association of Community Colleges
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Council on Education
American Indian Higher Education Consortium
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
Association of American Universities
Association of Community College Trustees
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
Association of Rabbinical and Talmudic Schools
Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors
Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs
Council of Arts Accrediting Associations
Council on Higher Education Accreditation
Council on Naturopathic Medical Education
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
National Association of College and University Business Officers
National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges
National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
Planning Accreditation Board