



Office of the President

July 31, 2008

U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

As you prepare to vote on the conference report on H.R. 4137, the Higher Education Opportunity Act, I write on behalf of the associations listed below to share our perspectives on this important legislation.

We applaud the provisions in this bill that will help low-income students finance their higher education. The bill simplifies the process of applying for student aid and strengthens essential student aid programs that help low-income students, including the Pell Grant Program, the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG) Program, the Perkins Loan Program, the Federal Work-Study (FWS) program, the Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership (LEAP) program, the TRIO programs and GEAR UP. We are especially pleased that the bill affirms that the Department of Education cannot regulate the academic standards of accrediting agencies or institutions of higher education. In tandem with the College Cost Reduction Act of 2007, which cut interest rates, boosted Pell Grants and increased federal loan limits, these provisions will make a substantial difference to students, families and institutions.

While this long and complex bill has a number of very desirable provisions, it also has a number of drawbacks. Most notably, it will create an extraordinary number of new federal reporting and regulatory requirements dealing with textbooks, tuition and fees, cost of attendance, alumni activities, foreign gift reporting, fire safety, graduation rates, drug violations, vaccines and peer-to-peer file sharing. Although some of these have been made less onerous as the legislative process has proceeded, the total volume of new federal requirements remains considerable.

The bill before you places a particular emphasis on enacting incentives to encourage colleges to hold down tuition charges, an endeavor in which our member institutions are actively engaged. Competing with that goal, however, are the numerous unfunded mandates that will be imposed on colleges and universities. Complying with these requirements will be time-consuming and inevitably will increase administrative and personnel costs on campuses.

The Higher Education Act has played a vital role in helping millions of students realize their dream of a college education and Congress needs to reauthorize this important act. Colleges and universities remain deeply committed to increasing college access for low-income students and continue to strongly support the partnership with the

federal government that has done so much to open college doors over the last half-century. We look forward to working with Congress and the Department of Education to ensure that this partnership is maintained throughout the implementation process.

Sincerely,



Molly Corbett Broad
President

MCB\ksm

On behalf of:

American Association of Community Colleges
American Council on Education
American Indian Higher Education Consortium
Association of American Universities
Association of Community College Trustees
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
Council for Higher Education Accreditation
EDUCAUSE
National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges



Office of the President

July 31, 2008

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Molly C. Broad". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Molly Corbett Broad
President

MCB\ksm

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American Association of Community Colleges
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