

September Newsletter

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NEA
STUDENT-PROGRAM

Congress Gives Final Nod to Legislation to Making College More Affordable

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NEA Leaders Applaud Efforts to Help Ensure No One is Denied Access to Higher Education



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10% Off Barnes & Nobles

WASHINGTON--Congress today approved the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007 helping to make the dream of higher education a reality for most low- and middle-income students. The legislation, which has yet to be signed by President Bush, would implement several student loan program reforms designed to eliminate waste and mismanagement and also:

- Increase the Pell Grant program by \$12 billion
- Cut interest rates on subsidized student loans in half;
- Create new TEACH grants to provide financial support for those entering the teaching profession and
- Create an Asian American and Pacific Islander Higher Education Serving Institution designation.

The following statement can be attributed to Reg Weaver, president of the National Education Association, and Anthony Daniels, chair of the NEA Student Program:

“This legislation is so important for the teaching profession,” said Weaver. “We are losing talented college and university students who want to teach and would make wonderful educators but can’t afford to enter the classroom because of staggering student loan debt and low pay. Our students and public schools can’t afford to lose those who would make good teachers. I urge President Bush to sign this legislation into law and help us ensure all children have great public schools.”

“I am living proof that this legislation is needed,” said Daniels. “After completing my undergraduate education, I owed more in student loans than I was scheduled to make as a starting teacher. Unfortunately, my situation is not unique but, in fact, is becoming the norm. We need this legislation, and I urge President Bush to sign it into law. ”



Nation's Largest Education Association Urges House Committee to Reject Draft Language for Reauthorization of No Child Left Behind Law

NEA PRESIDENT REG WEAVER URGES LAWMAKERS NOT TO MISS OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE MAJOR COURSE CORRECTION

WASHINGTON—NEA President Reg Weaver called on members of the House Education and Labor Committee to reject draft language currently under discussion for the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act while testifying to the Committee today.

Weaver asked the Committee to slow the legislative process down in order to make a truly meaningful and major course correction in how the federal government supports state and local education initiatives. In his testimony, Weaver told the Committee, “We are not able to support the discussion draft as currently written. We are hopeful that the Committee will take the time to make meaningful changes.”

Speaking about his comments to the Committee, Weaver added, “The draft that has been provided for discussion makes only minor tweaks in the divisive and dysfunctional law that parents, teachers, and public schools have been saddled with these past five years. If they’re not going to make meaningful changes that truly address the needs of America’s public school students, a major opportunity will have been missed.

“The draft language is still too focused on high stakes testing, punishments, labeling of children, and unfunded federal mandates,” added Weaver. “It fails to adequately address the issues that parents and teachers know best provide a positive impact on student success such as reducing class size, increasing the training and retention of highly qualified teachers, expanding access to early childhood education, and providing adequate funding for improved school facilities and materials.

“We know that in the existing law,” said Weaver, “there have been countless places where the language was unclear, where the provisions of one section directly contradicted those of another section, and where the act was in conflict with other existing federal education laws. The children of America deserve more than being the victims of a process that allows politicians to pad their scorecard for passing legislation while the end result of that legislation is actually detrimental to teaching, learning, and providing great public schools as a basic right for every child.”

Speaking on behalf of NEA’s 3.2 million members, the NEA President cautioned the Committee that rushing to get a bill passed before some arbitrary deadline could lead to a new set of unintended and negative consequences. “We do not believe the Committee’s first discussion draft adequately remedies the problematic provisions of current law,” said Weaver.

“We are not able to support the discussion draft as currently written.

“Reg Weaver”