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INFRASTRUCTURE

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
AND THE WORKFORCE

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**Vote NO on H.R. 609**  
**and oppose intrusive Transfer of Credit language.**

Dear Colleague,

As a former college chief administrator, I have serious concerns about the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. I want to call some of the bill's more problematic language to your attention before you vote on H.R. 609

This month, as high school seniors across the country receive their college acceptance letters, their proud parents are calculating how they can squeeze college costs into their budgets. It's an uphill climb for most middle-class families that is made tougher by \$12 billion in cuts to student aid included in reconciliation the President's budget, which freezes Pell Grants for a fifth year in a row, and H.R. 609, which provides little if anything to increase access and affordability for students.

Access to higher education for all is imperiled by the policies of this Administration and the majority in Congress. If we are to sustain our leadership and competitive edge in the global economy, we cannot afford to enact policies that could lead to only the elite being able to afford to go to college.

One particular provision in H.R. 609 that is especially troubling is the inclusion of language that would impose new "transfer of credit" mandates on colleges and universities. **Specifically, the bill federalizes the way colleges and universities award academic transfer of credit to students by forcing schools that receive transferring students to evaluate the sending college's coursework, the professors' qualifications, and even the syllabus of each course. In principle, Congress should not be interfering in the academic decisions made on a college campus. Colleges and universities are fully capable of developing and implementing fair and appropriate transfer of credit policies on their own.**

This transfer of credit language would create costly new bureaucratic headaches for students and institutions, open the door to fraud and abuse, and upset the balance between federal regulation and academic autonomy. By eliminating the right of institutions to make their own academic decisions regarding transfer of credit, this bill will undermine the basic mission of many institutions. Simply put, the Federal government has no role making academic decisions for institutions of higher education and their students. Passage of H.R. 609 would assert such a role.

I offered an amendment to the Rules Committee that would have removed this harmful language, but as of now, it has not been made in order. I am opposing H.R.609 for many reasons, particularly for its lack of investment in student access and the intrusive transfer of credit language included in the bill. For these reasons, and assuming few if any improvements will be made to the bill during the amendment process, I urge you to vote against final passage of H.R. 609.

Sincerely,

Timothy Bishop  
Member of Congress