

June 21, 2016

Honorable John Kline
Chairman
Committee on Education and
the Workforce
United States House of Representatives
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Bobby Scott
Ranking Member
Committee on Education and
the Workforce
United States House of Representatives
2101 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Kline and Ranking Member Scott:

On behalf of the undersigned higher education associations, we write regarding the package of higher education legislation your committee will consider on Wednesday, June 22, 2016.

We are encouraged by the Committee's focus on improving the financial aid process, enhancing consumer information and strengthening federal programs that support the work of minority serving institutions such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Hispanic-Serving Institutions. Taken together, these bills represent a significant step forward in the ongoing process of reauthorizing the Higher Education Act, and meaningfully advance the discussion on these critical issues

In particular, the bills addressing minority serving institutions represent an opportunity to make necessary corrections to existing law. The *HBCU Capital Financing Improvement Act* (H.R. 5530) enjoys the support of the higher education community. As currently drafted this bill would make targeted changes to improve a program that is critical to these institutions and their historically underserved students. We look forward to working with the committee to strengthen the bill through the inclusion of additional improvements to enhance the overall effectiveness of the program.

Similarly, the community is pleased with the intent of the language in Representatives Heck and Hinojosa's *Accessing Higher Education Opportunities Act* (H.R. 5529). Its expansion of allowable uses for HEA Title V funds should assist Hispanic and other low-income and first generation students' ability to access post baccalaureate programs that require advanced or terminal degrees in a number of health care related fields. In addition, we are supportive of language to allow for the use of HEA Title V funds to promote the implementation of dual enrollment programs amongst Hispanic students at the secondary level. Dual enrollment programs will increase the number of options available at Hispanic-Serving Institutions to

support higher education attainment amongst the students eventually enrolled at these 435 colleges and universities in 18 states across the country.

We were pleased to see the changes proposed to the application process for federal financial aid in the *Simplifying the Application for Student Aid Act* (H.R. 5528). This bill contains several common-sense adjustments to the application process, allowing students to have a clear idea of what aid for which they may be eligible much earlier in the process, without imposing additional burden on institutions. We are also grateful that the bill includes strong consumer testing provisions, ensuring that the application forms are clearly understandable to prospective users.

The other bills under consideration by the committee address consumer information and the financial aid counseling process. While we are strongly supportive of the goals of these bills, our members have concerns about how specific aspects of the *Empowering Students Through Enhanced Financial Counseling Act* (H.R. 3179) and the *Strengthening Transparency in Higher Education Act* (H.R. 3178), would impact students and institutions. In particular, several elements of both bills are complex and likely to be difficult and expensive to implement, and we look forward to working with you to streamline and simplify those provisions so as to make them as effective as possible.

It is critically important to ensure that all students receive the financial counseling they need and are able to make informed decisions regarding where to pursue their studies, while appropriately limiting substantial burden and expense that may be placed on colleges and universities. We appreciate the sponsors' efforts to help students and their families and are eager to collaborate with them to improve these bills and strike the appropriate balance in meeting those goals.

We are grateful to the sponsors and the Committee for consistently welcoming feedback, and appreciate your attention to our comments.

Sincerely,



Molly Corbett Broad
President

On behalf of:

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
American Association of Community Colleges
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Council on Education
American Indian Higher Education Consortium

Education and the Workforce Legislation

June 21, 2016

Association of American Universities
Association of Community College Trustees
Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Council for Christian Colleges and Universities
Council for Opportunity in Education
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
NASPA - Student Affairs Professionals in Higher Education
National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education
National Association of College and University Business Officers
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
National Council for Community and Education Partnerships
Thurgood Marshall College Fund
UNCF