**From:** NAICU Presidents Network
**To:** NAICU Presidents Network;
**Subject:** [presnet] Action Needed on Stimulus Package/Deadline on GI Bill Comment
**Date:** Thursday, January 15, 2009 4:34:38 PM

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Colleagues,

I write today with two important issues for your immediate action: (1) The breaking news and action needed on on the congressional stimulus package, and (2) a notice on the new GI bill. Thank you for taking a few minutes to read and respond to these breaking action items from Washington.

David

David L. Warren
President, NAICU

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## 1. ACTION ALERT ON HOUSE STIMULUS BILL

**Action Needed: Contact your U. S. Representative and ask for their support of the proposed student aid increases in the House economic stimulus bill.** Also thank them for providing a set-aside for higher education in the governor's construction funds, and for making it clear that private colleges are able to compete for these funds. Please call, fax, or e-mail your Representative to voice your support for this historic federal support of higher education.

**Details:** Today the House Appropriations Committee released details of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, also known as the stimulus package. NAICU strongly supports the proposed increases in student aid, and is appreciative that private colleges will be able to compete for "shovel-ready" higher education construction funds that are going to the governors. Specifically, the proposal includes:

- $15.6 billion for a $500 increase in the Pell Grant maximum, to $5,350
- $490 million increase in Federal Work Study to support students who work
- $2,000 loan limit increase for unsubsidized Stafford loans
- $50 million for student aid administration to handle the increase in applications

- $6 billion for higher education modernization, renovation, technology upgrades, and energy-efficiency improvements
- $10 billion for science facilities, research, and instrumentation

**Talking Points:** In addition to referencing the specific higher education provisions, please outline for your Representative how the increases in student aid will help your students; and stress the importance of your college or university to your local or regional economy. Having your House member understand your role in the local economy will go a long way toward gaining an appreciation in Congress for the critical role private nonprofit higher education can play in our economic recovery.

- Our first priority in addressing the economic downturn has always been to keep students from stopping or dropping out of their higher education programs, and ensuring that workers have access to higher education in order to retrain for new jobs.
- Thank you for providing a substantial increase in student aid funding, and in loan limits. Both will be invaluable in helping low- and middle-income students whose financial situations have deteriorated over the past year.
- At my institution this student aid will help *(number)* students . . . .
- Thank you also for ensuring that private colleges will be able to compete for the $6 billion in higher education modernization funds going to governors, and also for including the private college FTE enrollment in the state distribution formula. At my institution, for example we have *(number)* of "shovel-ready" projects that, with some financial support, could quickly create jobs.
- I look forward to working with you on this legislation, and hope you will be able to visit our campus back home in the near future.

**Timing:** Please contact your Representative as soon as possible in support of the provisions important to private colleges. The House Appropriations Committee is scheduled to review and approve this proposal in a legislative mark-up next week (the week of January 19), with a vote on the House floor possible the following week. Your timely contact can prove instrumental in keeping student aid and private higher education in the bill as it moves through the process.

**Additional Background:** The House Tax Committee has proposed a consolidation of existing higher education tax benefits for tuition. Under the plan, some families will win and others will lose. Given that a better proposal is on the table in the Senate, we are not supporting the House plan tax benefit plan at this time. Also, the construction language in the House stimulus bill includes

restrictions on use of funds for religious purposes (similar to restrictions in current higher education law). Additionally, priority is given to certain forms of construction, and to institutions that serve large proportions of low-income or minority students.

There are many other provisions in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act proposal that could include private colleges and universities through local and state activities. There are additional details in the House Appropriations Committee news release.

## 2. ONE WEEK TO RESPOND TO POST-9/11 GI BILL REGS

Comments on the proposed regulations dealing with the new Post-9/11 GI Bill program are due on January 22, 2009. NAICU plans to submit comments focusing on the proposals for the "Yellow Ribbon" program. We are putting together a draft letter, and are now seeking feedback from institutions regarding whether the points raised in the letter adequately cover the issues that may arise on campuses participating in the program.

If you or others on your campus can contribute to this effort, please contact Susan Hattan at susan@naicu.edu . The proposed regulations and related information about the Post-9/11 GI Bill program are posted on the NAICU Web site.

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