Message in brief: The historical federal role of providing access and choice for all who aspire to higher education is extremely important and should not be abandoned in favor of untested ideas for education. We recognize that college prices and debt can present financial challenges for students and their families, and we are working to maintain both at reasonable levels. We want to participate in finding solutions, while avoiding micromanagement by state governments and overregulation by the Department of Education. American higher education has thrived because of its independence, its flexibility, and its ability to provide both skills for jobs and enrichment for life. We need your help to preserve these strengths.

- Opening: Federal support of financial aid for those attending college is critically important to my students, my institution, and our local community. Thank you for your support.

- Student Aid: We recognize that budget constraints require that all federal programs — including student aid — must be given a close look. As you consider changes in this area, please:
  - Protect the critical role of student aid in providing access for needy students.
  - Avoid “trendy” unproven reform models that divert dollars from student access. Examine, and make available, the specific impact of formula and other program changes before they become law.

- Cost: We understand why people are worried about paying for college. We are making every effort to meet student need so that college is affordable. (Give examples from your institution.) We also need to encourage saving for college, which is currently at a very low level.

- Debt: While student debt is a concern, most student debt is manageable. The average debt upon graduation is just over $29,000. (Give examples from your institution.)

- Value/Ratings: We believe that the benefits of higher education are multi-dimensional, and not all are easily measurable. We are very supportive of initiatives that would help students find their best fit colleges, but do not believe they should see their Pell grant awards reduced simply because of the college they choose to attend.

- Completion: College completion is an important federal goal — and private nonprofit colleges have the best graduation rates of all sectors. However, if there are to be new initiatives in this area, we hope that: (1) any proposed changes in the distribution of federal aid will be made public before a vote; (2) Congress will not impose inappropriate rules on the awarding of academic credit, which is central to each institution’s mission; and (3) if states are to coordinate any such efforts, that the participation of private nonprofit colleges be accommodated in a way that recognizes these institutions are not state entities.
• **Regulatory Burden:** Reporting, disclosure, and other compliance activities have grown to overwhelming proportions. We support the work of the Task Force on Government Regulation of Higher Education and hope it will provide relief. It is not encouraging though, as it appears the Education Department is about to issue confusing and unnecessarily burdensome distance education regulations. Please don’t allow new requirements until you’ve carefully assessed those that are already in place.

• **Teacher Preparation** (*If teacher preparation is an important part of your college’s academic program*): We support legislation ensuring high-quality teacher preparation programs assessed via multiple measures and research-based practices. We oppose regulations not based on actual practice or valid research – such as using value-added test scores of K-12 students to reward, punish, or even close teacher preparation programs whose graduates teach those students.
House Committee on Education and the Workforce

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Tom Petri, WI
Howard P. “Buck” McKeon, CA
Joe Wilson, SC
Virginia Foxx, NC, *Chair of Higher Education Subcommittee*
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Kenny Marchant, TX
Duncan Hunter, CA
Phil Roe, TN
Glenn Thompson, PA
Tim Walberg, MI
Matt Salmon, AZ
Brett Guthrie, KY
Scott DesJarlais, TN
Todd Rokita, IN
Larry Buschon, IN
Lou Barletta, PA
Joe Heck, NV
Mike Kelly, PA
Susan Brooks, IN
Richard Hudson, NC
Luke Messer, IN
Bradley Byrne, AL

**Democrats (18)**
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Robert C. Scott, VA
Rubén Hinojosa, TX, *Ranking Member of Higher Education Subcommittee*
Carolyn McCarthy, NY
John F. Tierney, MA
Rush D. Holt, NJ
Susan A. Davis, CA
Raúl M. Grijalva, AZ
Timothy H. Bishop, NY
Dave Loebsack, IA
Joe Courtney, CT
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Mark Takano, CA

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Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions

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Patty Murray, WA
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Kay Hagan, NC
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Sheldon Whitehouse, RI
Tammy Baldwin, WI
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Johnny Isakson, GA
Rand Paul, KY
Orrin G. Hatch, UT
Pat Roberts, KS
Lisa Murkowski, AK
Mark Steven Kirk, IL
Tim Scott, SC