



FACT SHEET

EDUCATION & THE WORKFORCE COMMITTEE

Advancing Competency-Based Education Demonstration Project Act

THE PROBLEM:

The cost of obtaining a college degree has risen dramatically over the past decade. For example, since 2002 in-state tuition and fees at public four-year and two-year institutions increased by 51 percent and 35 percent, respectively. During this same period of time, the cost of attending a private four-year institution increased by approximately 25 percent. To exacerbate rising college costs, there are federal roadblocks impeding efforts to provide a postsecondary education in a less costly, more effective way.

For example, regulators and institutions have traditionally used “credit hours” to measure student progress and disburse student aid. This model made sense when “seat time” was the best proxy for learning. However, today institutions are developing new models of education that can measure students’ actual learning rather than just the time spent in class. This type of innovation can offer students a wealth of new educational opportunities tailored to their specific personal and financial needs, yet outdated federal policies are standing in the way.

THE SOLUTION:

As part of an effort to reauthorize the *Higher Education Act*, the House Education and the Workforce Committee is working to support more innovation across the nation’s college campuses. To this end, Reps. Matt Salmon (R-AZ), Susan Brooks (R-IN), and Jared Polis (D-CO) introduced the *Advancing Competency-Based Education Demonstration Project*. Passed by the Committee on Education and the Workforce with overwhelming bipartisan support, the legislation (H.R. 3136) will provide students new opportunities to receive a high-quality education in a way that best serves their personal and financial needs.

H.R. 3136 – ADVANCING COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION DEMONSTRATION PROJECT ACT

- ✓ Promotes innovation in higher education by directing the secretary of education to implement competency-based education demonstration projects. The secretary is authorized to waive current statutory and regulatory requirements that impede the creation of competency-based education programs.
- ✓ Provides accountability by requiring an annual evaluation of each demonstration project to determine program quality, the progress of participating students towards earning a degree, obstacles related to student financial assistance, and the extent to which other legal barriers may exist that prevent the success of competency-based education.
- ✓ Delivers greater flexibility to institutions that want to provide students a more personalized, cost-effective education.