



The Education Trust

Closing the gaps in opportunity and achievement, pre-k through college.

July 23, 2014

The Honorable John Kline
Committee on Education and the Workforce
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable George Miller
Committee on Education and the Workforce
2205 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Kline and Ranking Member Miller:

H.R. 4983, the Strengthening Transparency in Higher Education Act, and H.R. 4984, the Empowering Students through Enhanced Financial Counseling Act, both improve resources for students and families as they make decisions about higher education. We believe these bills offer a good next step in efforts to address issues important to low-income students and students of color as they seek to access and complete postsecondary education.

H.R. 4983 would provide more streamlined and useful information for students and families as they seek to make college choices. It would help students and families make better informed decisions about which college or university is the best financial fit for them, offering the most value for their money. H.R. 4984 builds on information provided under H.R. 4983 by expanding financial aid counseling that students receive when they use federal student aid. In light of new lifetime Pell Grant limits, we especially appreciate the bill's focus on ensuring that students are aware of their remaining Pell eligibility.

These bills address the important issues of improved information and financial aid counseling. However, if more of our young people are to access, afford, and complete a postsecondary education, we must do more to address the staggering and rapidly growing cost of college, especially for low- and moderate-income students. We must also do more to hold states and institutions of higher education accountable for doing their share to make higher education accessible and affordable, and also to make sure students complete meaningful degrees.

The Education Trust has offered several proposals to address these outstanding challenges. We are encouraged that the Committee has started the process of debating higher education issues and is moving legislation forward. These two bills are a good start, but more is necessary. We stand ready to help address remaining issues critical to students seeking to complete a postsecondary education.

Thank you for your leadership in beginning this important work.

Sincerely,

Kati Haycock
President