



COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION & LABOR
REPUBLICANS

COMMITTEE
STATEMENT

**Opening Statement of Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC), Republican Leader
Committee on Education and Labor
Markup of H.R. 4674, *College Affordability Act*
October 29, 2019**

(As prepared for delivery)

“Our postsecondary education system is in desperate need of meaningful reform. Unfortunately, the legislation before us today doubles down on failed policies and hurts students.

Democrats spend other people’s hard-earned money with reckless abandon. This bill gives tens of billions of dollars to colleges instead of investing directly in students and trusting that students and their families know what is best for them. The Democrats use American taxpayer money to give illegal immigrants tuition-free community college and Pell Grants, which are funds that should be directed towards low-income students to help pay for college. This partisan legislation will also force all Americans, including the roughly 70 percent who do not have a bachelor’s degree, to pay for all students, including millionaires, to receive ‘free’ college and massive loan bailouts.

We have a responsibility to diligently and responsibly allocate taxpayer dollars to those who truly need assistance. Too many in this Committee find it way too easy to spend hard-earned taxpayer dollars without promising accountability. That is an insult to every citizen who has entrusted us with their representation. Yet, the Democrats’ bill throws billion and billions of dollars at a failing system.

The title of this bill, the *College Affordability Act*, is misleading. It will contribute to the skyrocketing costs of postsecondary education. Tuition and fees have outpaced inflation for decades. Instead of addressing exploding college costs, Democrats turn a blind eye to what is causing these increases. Instead of putting forward commonsense proposals, Democrats dramatically expand federal

intervention and significantly increase mandates on colleges and universities. Every dollar an institution spends complying with the federal government is a dollar NOT spent on keeping costs low for consumers. Democrats add dozens of reporting requirements and other expenses, which always get passed on to students and taxpayers.

Furthermore, the bill fails to hold bad programs accountable. Easy access to taxpayer money with no fear of consequences for poor outcomes has led schools to increase their prices. H.R. 4674 allows programs that do not set students up for success to continue to receive federal dollars. We shouldn't reward bad behavior, but that's exactly what this bill does.

Federal requirements are stifling interaction between businesses and college campuses. By failing to advance innovative practices that help students transition from the classroom to a career the legislation fails to setup the next generation of Americans for career success. We have no idea what the future of postsecondary education may bring and this Democrat bill, with all of its requirements, provides no flexibility for innovations that we cannot comprehend sitting here today.

The skills gap in this country must be addressed if we hope to cultivate a qualified workforce for the future. But by furthering the harmful rhetoric that everyone needs a baccalaureate degree to achieve lifelong success, Democrats are completely ignoring that not all good jobs require degrees. The policies at the heart of this legislation will widen our nation's skills gap and harm America's economy.

In closing, the so-called *College Affordability Act* will cost hundreds of billions of dollars, limit educational freedom, increase the cost of college for students, and ignore the needs of those pursuing the American Dream.

Instead of promoting unworkable partisan bills, we ought to work together – and I mean actual collaboration – to give students' access to affordable postsecondary education that will prepare them to enter the workforce with the skills they need for lifelong success.”

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