

H.R. 6472, TERRITORIAL STUDENT ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION ACT

CONGRESSMAN JAMES MOYLAN (R-GU)

BACKGROUND: U.S. territories—including Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), American Samoa, and the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI)—face unique geographic and economic challenges that limit access to higher education. Small populations, remote locations, and constrained local economies make it difficult for residents to pursue specialized training or advanced degrees close to home.

As a result, college completion rates in the territories lag far behind the 50 states. According to the 2024 American Community Survey, 36.8% of Americans age 25 and older hold a bachelor's degree or higher. In contrast:

American Samoa: 13.3%

CNMI: 21%

USVI: 23.3%

Guam: 25.3%

At the same time, these territories play a critical role in U.S. national security. The USVI supports U.S. military operations in Central and South America. Guam, CNMI, and American Samoa host key military installations and serve as strategic hubs in the Indo-Pacific region.

THE PROBLEM: Territorial students who seek degrees not available locally must attend colleges on the mainland—but they are often charged out-of-state tuition.

For many students, cost—not ability—is what prevents them from earning a degree. The lack of affordable access to higher education limits workforce development, economic growth, and long-term stability in the territories.

THE SOLUTION: H.R. 6472, *Territorial Student Access to Higher Education Act*, ensures that residents and U.S. nationals from Guam, CNMI, American Samoa, and USVI receive in-state tuition rates at public colleges and universities in the 50 states.

Specifically, the bill:

- Requires public colleges to charge territorial students the same tuition and fees as in-state residents.
- Builds on existing precedent—similar protections already apply to servicemembers and their families.

By lowering tuition costs, the bill:

- Expands access to advanced degrees and specialized training.
- Strengthens workforce pipelines in strategically important regions.
- Encourages graduates to return home with new skills, credentials, and professional networks.

BOTTOM LINE:

H.R. 6472 is a targeted approach to make college more affordable, strengthen our workforce, and support U.S. national security.

