

Title: Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act

Sponsor: Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA)

Describe the issue (Sarah)

The issue is that higher education is not affordable or accessible. The Higher Education Act is a massive document that encompasses a majority of the higher education legislation including, but not limited to, the following programs, Pell Grant, Stafford Loan Program, Federal Perkins Loan, and TRIO Programs. By advocating for the following legislation we hope to make higher education more accessible and affordable.

What are you advocating for?

We are advocating for the Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act with amendments intending to make financial aid and the repayment of student loans easier and more accessible with bills such as S. 108 Financial Aid Simplification and Transparency Act and S. 85 Repay Act of 2015. Also, we are advocating for amendments, in line with the USSA, addressing mandatory Pell Grant funding, increasing maximum Pell Grant Award, the re-institution of year round Pell Grants and the expansion of Pell access to more students. These goals could be accomplished with the introduction and passage of S. 2194 and passage of H.R. 242 as outlined below. Possible revenue sources to accomplish these tasks would be to stop subsidizing For-Profit Colleges and also redirect student loan profits.

Senate

Pell Grant Protection Act [S.21941 (not yet introduced this legislative session)

- Year-Round Pell Grant: Enable students to take out an *additional* Pell Grant for years where they are taking extra classes outside of their traditional semesters
- Mandatory Pell: Enforce the Pell Grant as a *mandatory spending program*, meaning that the U.S. Congress may *not* decrease the funding, yet are still able to increase it.
- Inflation adjustments: Along with Pell becoming mandatory, this grant would also *automatically increase on a yearly basis* depending upon the rate of inflation for that year.

House

All-Year ACCESS Act [H.R. 2421 (has been introduced)

- Year-Round Pell Grant: Enable students to take out an *additional* Pell Grant for years where they are taking extra classes outside of their traditional semesters.
- Increase eligibility: Instead of only being able to have Pell for 12 semester, this would increase that to 15 semesters.

- Fully Funded Pell: Tie the Pell Grant to the national average of tuition for four-year public universities (currently \$9139)
- Reallocate Student Debt Profits: Reallocate the billions of dollars in student debt revenue (\$127 billion over 10 years) to pay for our changes to the Pell Grant.

Who do you have as a support so far?

Sponsors

S. 108:

Sponsor: Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN)

Cosponsors:

Bennet, Michael [P-CO1] (joined Jan 7, 2015) Booker, Cory [P-NJ1] (joined Jan 7, 2015) Burr, Richard [R-NC1] (joined Jan 7, 2015) Isakson, John "Johnny" [R-GA1] (joined Jan 7, 2015) King, Angus [I-ME1] (joined Jan 7, 2015) Hatch, Orrin [R-UT1] (joined Jan 26, 2015) Kirk, Mark [R-IL1] (joined Jan 26, 2015) Perdue, David [R-GA1] (joined Jan 26, 2015)

S. 85: Sponsor: Senator Angus King (I-ME)

Cosponsors:

Alexander, Lamar [R-TN1] (joined Jan 7, 2015) Burr, Richard [R-NC1] (joined Jan 7, 2015) Collins, Susan [R-ME1] (joined Jan 7, 2015) Rubio, Marco [R-FL1] (joined Jan 7, 2015) Warner, Mark [P-VA1] (joined Jan 7, 2015) Ayotte, Kelly [R-NH1] (joined Jan 26, 2015) Capito, Shelley [R-WV1] (joined Jan 26, 2015) Shaheen, Jeanne [D-NH1] (joined Feb 9, 2015) Carper, Thomas [D-DE1] (joined Feb 23, 2015)

H.R. 242: Sponsor: Rep. Loretta Sanchez (D-CA)

60 cosponsors (59D, 1R) including Smith, Adam [D-WA91] (joined Jan 9, 2015) McDermott, Jim [D-WA71] (joined Jan 20, 2015) Larsen, Rick [D-WA21] (joined Jan 27, 2015)

Who needs to be moved/potential opposition?

S. 108 and S. 85 have bipartisan support but not much of it. They have 8 and 9 cosponsors, respectively, with the majority of the cosponsors on both bills being from the majority party. To generate traction these bills need attention drawn to them by bringing the issues of higher education to the attention of Congress.

H.R. 242 has mostly partisan support coming from House Democrats. The majority party will need to be swayed in order to secure passage through the House Education and Workforce Committee.

Provide any legislative background and context for the issue? (Sarah)

The Higher Education Act a piece of legislation that encompasses all federal policies relating to higher education. The HEA is reauthorized every 6 years. The reauthorization process is a long process and is our chance to make sure we see the changes that benefit students and make it more affordable and accessible for all students.

The most relevant section of the Higher Education Act is Title IV: Student Assistance.

Good resources to check out for information on sections:

<http://www.nasfaa.org/reauth/>

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/subjects/education/5991>