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A Union of Professionals

American Federation of Teachers
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February 27, 2007

The Honorable George Miller
Chair, Committee on Education and Labor
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Miller:

On behalf of the more than 4 million members of both the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the National Education Association (NEA), we write in support of H.R. 990, the Pell Grant Equity Act of 2007. This crucial legislation will allow students with the greatest financial need to receive Pell Grant awards regardless of what institution they attend.

Access to postsecondary education remains a top priority for our organizations. As you know, such access allows individuals to succeed in jobs with career potential and upward mobility. Expanding postsecondary education opportunities also helps ensure the well-educated workforce our nation needs to compete in the 21st century.

We believe H.R. 990 will assist in expanding access by removing the Higher Education Act's "tuition sensitivity" language, which decreases a student's Pell Grant award based on the school's tuition. "Tuition sensitivity" discriminates against the most economically disadvantaged students by not focusing on a student's need or the student's expected family contribution. At a time when we should be applauding and providing incentives to states and colleges that are working hard to keep tuition, fees and other education costs in check, current law punishes these institutions and the students who attend them.

Removal of the "tuition sensitivity" language will help make college more affordable for students with the greatest need. H.R. 990 would provide a one-year fix for the 2007-08 academic year. According to the Congressional Research Service, the bill would affect approximately 96,000 students in the upcoming academic year and provide an average Pell Grant scholarship increase of \$108 per student.

We thank you for your constant leadership and support on these important issues.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Kristor Cowan.

Kristor Cowan
Director, Legislation Department
American Federation of Teachers

Handwritten signature of Diane Shust.

Diane Shust
Director, Government Relations
National Education Association

Handwritten signature of Randall Moody.

Randall Moody
Manager, Federal Advocacy
National Education Association