



American Federation
of Teachers, AFL-CIO

AFT Teachers
AFT PSRP
AFT Higher Education
AFT Public Employees
AFT Healthcare

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July 18, 2007

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the more than 1.4 million members of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), including 160,000 higher education professionals, I urge you to support the Higher Education Access Act (S. 1762) and to oppose any amendments that would weaken the bill. This legislation would provide the single largest federal investment in higher education since the GI Bill.

In particular, the AFT applauds Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee Chairman Edward Kennedy and Sen. Michael Enzi for their leadership and commitment to expanding access and making higher education more affordable for all who attend college.

Working families and aspiring students across the nation are struggling to find the financial resources to go to college. Many who are unable to get financial assistance stop short of pursuing a postsecondary education. Even the low- and middle-income students who are fortunate enough to attend college are graduating with unprecedented levels of debt. Congress needs to respond to this crisis by passing S. 1762.

S. 1762 would help college students and their families receive more funding for college by:

- Increasing the Pell Grant maximum to \$5,100 next year and to \$5,400 by 2011;
- Simplifying the process of applying for federal student loans;
- Encouraging public service by providing loan forgiveness for public employees;
- Increasing income protections for working students; and
- Capping monthly loan payments at 15 percent of discretionary income.

We urge you to oppose any amendments that would weaken these important changes. Specifically, we urge you to oppose an amendment that may be offered by

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Sen. Ben Nelson (D-Neb.) and Sen. Richard Burr (R-N.C.) that would eliminate funding for student aid and would continue to provide lenders with excessive federal subsidies.

Thank you for considering our views. Again, the AFT urges you to vote YES on S. 1762.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'KWC', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kristor W. Cowan
Director, Legislation Department

KWC:gd opeiu#2 afl-cio