



American Federation  
of Teachers, AFL-CIO

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

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July 20, 2005

The Honorable John A. Boehner  
Chairman  
House Committee on Education and the Workforce  
2181 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Boehner:

On behalf of the more than 1.3 million members of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), including 150,000 higher education professionals, we write to express our views on H.R. 609, the College Access and Opportunity Act of 2005.

We recognize the progress made during subcommittee consideration on several issues of importance to the AFT. However, a number of outstanding issues of great interest to our members—chief among them the overall lack of increases for federal student aid—remain unresolved and prevent us from supporting H.R. 609 at this time.

The AFT believes that the current Higher Education Act (HEA) reauthorization represents a tremendous opportunity both to improve access to higher education for America's low- and middle-income students and to improve the quality of teacher education and preparation programs. However, in its current form, H.R. 609 is overly focused on improving access to federal aid for private entrepreneurs. Every HEA reauthorization since 1965 has focused on the expansion of college opportunity. Unfortunately, H.R. 609 does not carry forward this legacy because it fails to provide the necessary supports to enable students to enter and succeed in college. We respectfully request that you review our specific comments on H.R. 609, which are attached for your review. We also identify several amendments that will be offered during markup that we believe will improve the bill and move us toward fulfilling the historic mission of the act.

We look forward to working with you on these issues of great importance to AFT higher education professionals and the students they serve, and to improving the bill as it moves through the legislative process.

Chairman Boehner/HEA/H.R. 609/Page 2

Thank you for considering the AFT's views on H.R. 609.

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 : emc opeiu#2 afl-cio

Enclosures: (1)