

**THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS AND THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION  
POSITIONS ON SELECTED AMENDMENTS TO H.R. 609**

As a follow-up to our letter of March 23, 2006, we offer our views on selected amendments that may be proposed to H.R. 609, the College Access and Opportunity Act of 2005.

**AFT AND NEA OPPOSE:**

**X McKeon’s “manager’s amendment,” which fails to provide needed support and aid for students.**

Instead the amendment:

- Adds a new section under college costs. Even with the addition of the Quality Efficiency Task Force, the amendment will not sufficiently address concerns about the overall cost of postsecondary education in this country. We respect the interest in addressing college costs, but believe that additional issues need to be addressed—chief among them the declining support for higher education at the state level.
- Includes overly prescriptive outcome measures for the TRIO program. Performance indicators and measures are intended to help ensure programs are meeting the goals of the program. However, the language in H.R. 609 may have unintended consequences, including inaccurately identifying programs as being insufficient.
- Promotes an independent study on distance education, which we feel does not do enough to address our concerns with fraud and abuse. While we appreciate the effort to investigate the quality of distance education programs, we remain concerned that the budget reconciliation act has repealed the 50 percent rule. This rule excluded institutions that offer more than half of their coursework by distance education from receiving federal student aid. We support the reinstatement of this rule.

**X McMorris/Holt/Drier amendment to create the adjunct teacher corps.** The amendment assumes that anyone with subject matter knowledge can be a good teacher. This simply is not true. Teachers need to know not only their subject matter but also how best to teach it, which requires the knowledge of pedagogy based on sound research into how students learn. In addition, by exempting the adjunct teacher corps from the definition of “highly qualified,” the amendment as written undercuts NCLB’s goal of having a highly qualified teacher in every classroom. The amendment also proposes placing adjunct teachers in the highest need schools, the very schools that require the most qualified teachers.

**AFT AND NEA SUPPORT:**

- ✓ **Wilson (NM) amendment supporting research based professional development to improve student achievement in math and science in elementary and secondary schools.**

**AFT and NEA also support the following amendments expected to be considered by the Rules Committee later today.** (We will provide views on other amendments as information becomes available).

- ✓ **Miller/Kildee/Grijalva/Davis/Scott amendment to cut interest rates on student loans in half for low- and middle-income students in most need of help.** The amendment would decrease interest rates from 6.8 percent to 3.4 percent starting July 2006.

√ **Miller/Petri amendment to add the Student Aid Reward Act (STAR) to H.R. 609. This amendment will provide billions in additional college scholarships to undergraduate and graduate students.** The goal is to ensure greater access while lessening the debt burden by creating incentives for institutions of higher education to use the least expensive of the federal government's student loan programs. The amendment will allow institutions of higher education to use the savings to increase the level of Pell Grants for needy students on their campuses.