



*A Union of Professionals*

## AFT Higher Education Legislative Agenda 108th Congress

### Higher Education Act (HEA) (Reauthorization): Student Aid

#### Overall

- Ensure that students with the greatest financial need receive sufficient federal aid to attend college.
- Correct grant/loan imbalance that has developed with too little federal aid in the form of grants and too much in the form of loans.

#### Grants

- Increase the size of Pell grants, which is the number-one priority program for the neediest students.
- Resist any move to front-load Pell grants in the first two years of college.
- Make Pell grants an entitlement.
- Ensure that the need analysis system for Pell grants allows sufficient aid to reach students who do not/cannot rely on their families for financial support and is flexible enough to address the needs of nontraditional students.

#### Loans

- Curtail additional costs that have been imposed on loans (such as origination fees).
- Increase incentives in the loan program for students interested in pursuing a career in education.

#### Campus-Based Aid

- Retain/oppose elimination of the campus-based aid programs (Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, Work Study, and Perkins Loans) because these funds enable institutions to assist students who are not adequately helped by other aid sources.

### HEA: Student Educational Support Systems

- Support and expand TRIO programs, which provide educational support to match the financial support accorded to educationally disadvantaged students.
- Establish school-college collaboration and summer bridge programs to ensure that students have access to a college preparatory curriculum while providing basic skills in core areas.
- Establish a competitive grant program to support early identification, advisement and outreach services for college students (such as low income, older, minority, first-generation in college students) who are at risk of not graduating.

### HEA: Distance Education

- Retain the 50% rule (which limits federal funding for colleges offering most of their instruction through distance education) pending a national study of the potential impact on all needy students and on the federal budget of opening federal aid eligibility to these programs.
- Ensure that rigorous controls are in place to curb fraud and abuse in distance education programs.
- Require distance education programs to demonstrate that their students spend an appropriate amount of time on their studies.
- Ensure that distance education programs require some element of same-time, same place instruction.
- Institute large-scale federal research into distance education quality, particularly with regard to complete undergraduate programs by distance.

### HEA: Accreditation and Accountability

- Support the continuation of private institutional accreditation as a condition for participation in federal programs.
- Require accrediting agencies to (a) implement rigorous quality standards in the area of distance education; and (b) require participating institutions to maintain a strong system of shared governance and maintain a substantial corps of full-time tenured faculty.
- Oppose the use of graduation rates to reward or punish colleges and universities participating in federal programs.
- Oppose sanctions punishing institutions on the basis of college costs.
- Oppose the creation of a new federal oversight board for Title VI international studies programs that could intrude into institutional decision making on curriculum content and program activities.

### HEA: Institutional Aid

- Expand Title III eligibility to include institutions with large numbers of recent immigrants.
- Oppose expanding eligibility for federal programs to for-profit institutions.

HEA: Teacher Education, Title II

- Implement key recommendations of AFT's teacher education report Building a Profession:
- Provide funding to encourage K-12 faculty, college liberal arts faculty and teacher education faculty to develop (at the institutional level, possibly the national level) a strong liberal arts program for prospective education students.
- Initiate a major national effort to develop core curricula in pedagogy.
- Develop national tests to assess the achievement of teacher education students in subject matter and pedagogy.
- Support strong models in clinical experience, and particularly induction.
- Provide funding for models to enhance the role of community colleges in teacher education, particularly with regard to liberal arts training and two-year/four-year college articulation.

HEA: Child Care

- Strengthen program to provide child care services for low-income college student parents.
- Strengthen program to provide on-site campus child care.