



American Federation
of Teachers, AFL-CIO

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

555 New Jersey Ave. N.W.
Washington, DC 20001
202/879-4400
www.aft.org

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August 13, 2003

The Honorable Jon S. Corzine
United States Senate
502 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-3001

Dear Senator Corzine:

On behalf of the 1.2 million members of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), which includes over 125,000 higher education professionals, I write to express our support for your bill, S. 1265, which concerns changes in student aid awards when new data are used to implement need analysis. For example, implementation of the Pell grant formula for the 2004-2005 school year, as interpreted by the Department of Education, will reduce Pell grants for many students and eliminate them entirely for others.

S. 1265, would ensure that any readjustments made in the state tables used to determine the expected family contributions under the Pell grant program do not negatively affect a student's award. We believe that regular changes in data used to calculate the expected family contribution is a serious issue that needs to be addressed through the reauthorization process and that S. 1265 offers one approach that should be considered.

Since 1965, the federal government has committed itself, through the Higher Education Act, to break down financial barriers to college for the neediest students. This latest revision of the data by the Department of Education which reduces Pell grants for many students, challenges that commitment at a time when the economy is sluggish, unemployment is up and college costs are rising.

We appreciate your efforts and look forward to working with you on this and other issues of common interest as we reauthorize the Higher Education Act. If you have further questions, please contact me or Gabriella Gomez of our staff, at (202) 879-4452.

Sincerely,

Charlotte J. Fraas
Director, Legislation Department

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