

April 1, 2011

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510-0001

RE: Oppose the Kline-Foxx Amendment to the FY 2011 Continuing Resolution

Dear Leader Reid:

Thank you for your leadership in making college affordable for more students, especially low-income students. Your past efforts to increase the maximum Pell grant amount, strengthen the federal student loan program, and enhance educational opportunities for members of the military and veterans have gone a long way to ensuring access to post-secondary education for all students. These steps are essential to reach the President's goal of having the highest college graduation rate in the world by 2020.

But, we do nothing for students or our nation if we just guarantee access to debt without a serious opportunity for college completion. The Department of Education's proposed gainful employment regulation recognizes that some current career education programs are so toxic that they doom students to a lifetime of debt burden and waste millions of precious taxpayer dollars.

The Kline-Foxx amendment to H.R. 1 would prohibit the Department of Education from doing the minimum needed to protect students and taxpayers from the most toxic choices and would allow the continued flow of federal dollars into programs that have been, at best, ineffective and, at worst, routinely leaving students much worse off than when they enrolled. Specifically, the amendment would eliminate funding to:

- Enforce existing regulations that ensure students receive the kind of basic consumer information they need to make an informed choice about a career education program; and
- Finalize or implement any gainful employment regulation to protect students and taxpayers from wasteful career education programs at any type of college.

We urge you not to agree to the Kline-Foxx amendment as a rider as you negotiate a fiscal year 2011 continuing funding resolution. The absence of regulation in the gainful employment area has left the most vulnerable students unprotected from unethical career education programs and has bilked taxpayers out of millions of precious dollars in Pell Grants and Stafford Loans. We must stop such abuses. The Department should be allowed to both finalize and enforce these critical regulations without delay.

Sincerely,

AFL-CIO

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers

American Association of University Professors

American Association of University Women

American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees Local 3299

American Federation of Teachers

Americans for Financial Reform

Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance

Campaign for College Affordability

Campus Progress

Center for Law and Social Policy

Children's Defense Fund

The Coalition of Labor Union Women

Consumer Action

Council for Opportunity in Education

Dēmos: A Network for Ideas and Action

The Education Trust

GLSEN

The Greenlining Institute

The Institute for College Access & Success and its Project on Student Debt

Labor Council for Latin American Advancement

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights

League of United Latin American Citizens

Legal Momentum (formerly the Women's Legal Defense and Education Fund)

National Association for Bilingual Education

National Consumer Law Center (on behalf of its low-income clients)

National Council of La Raza

National Education Association

National Organization for Women

Neighborhood Economic Development Advocacy Project

Pride at Work

Public Advocates Inc.

Public Citizen

Public Higher Education Network of Massachusetts

United States Hispanic Leadership Institute

U.S. PIRG

United States Student Association

VetJobs

Young Invincibles

cc: The Honorable Arne Duncan, Secretary of Education

The Honorable Jacob "Jack" Lew, Director, Office of Management and Budget

Melody Barnes, Director, Domestic Policy Council

Valerie Jarrett, Senior White House Advisor

Gene Sperling, Director, National Economic Council