Higher Education Act Reform Petition

WHEREAS A provision in the Higher Education Act of 1998 mandates that students convicted of any drug-related offense (without regard to the nature of the offense or the offender) be denied eligibility for financial aid for periods ranging from one year to "indefinite," and;

WHEREAS No other class of offender (including those convicted of rape or other violent offense) faces similar restriction on student loan eligibility, and;

WHEREAS This provision will, by its very nature, impact primarily students of low to moderate economic means, and;

WHEREAS This provision will also have a discriminatory impact on people of color, as their communities are disproportionately targeted for enforcement of the drug laws (e.g. African Americans, who comprise 13% of the nation's population and 13% of drug users, make up 55% of those convicted for drug offenses), and;

WHEREAS To the extent that the federal government involves itself in education it should be focused on making it easier, not more difficult for citizens to educate themselves, and;

WHEREAS Education is an important factor in allowing people to become more productive, well-rounded citizens;

WE THE UNDERSIGNED call upon the 107th United States Congress to overturn that section of the Higher Education Act of 1998 that denies or delays access to financial aid based upon convictions for drug-related offenses.

Signature	Telephone No.	E-Mail Address (for e-mail updates)