



Coalition for Higher Education Act Reform

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Congressionally-Appointed Committee Calls for Repeal of Anti-Education Policy

WASHINGTON, DC – A Congressionally-appointed committee today called for the removal of a question about drug convictions from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), following the lead of over 180 organizations who oppose the drug provision of the Higher Education Act (HEA).

In a report titled “The Student Aid Gauntlet: Making Access to College Simple and Certain,” the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, an independent body created by Congress to advise it on higher education and student aid policy, called for the removal of the question that asks students if they have ever been convicted of a drug offense. Since this question was added to the FAFSA in 2000, it has led to over 157,000 students being denied financial aid. The report calls the question “irrelevant,” asserting that it “...add[s] complexity to the form and can deter some students from applying for financial aid.”

“We are pleased with the recommendation coming from the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance’s report,” said Chris Mulligan, Outreach Director of the Coalition for Higher Education Act Reform. “Mistakes young people made in the past should have no bearing on their ability to succeed in the future. Hopefully, Congress will heed the advice of its own appointees and work to repeal the drug provision during this session.”

Many members of Congress have already been active in trying to repeal the HEA drug provision. Last year, a House of Representatives bill to repeal the provision gained 70 cosponsors. A similar bill is expected to be introduced early in the 109th Congress.

The Coalition for Higher Education Act Reform’s work is supported by 180 organizations from a variety of perspectives, who have called on Congress to repeal the drug provision of the Higher Education Act, including groups such as the National Education Association, the United States Student Association, the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, the NAACP, and the American Council on Education.

Interviews are available. For further information, contact Brian Dolber at (202) 293-8340 or bdolber@raiseyourvoice.com, or visit www.raiseyourvoice.com.

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