

CASTLE CONFRONTS RISING COLLEGE COSTS -- July 31, 2008

Bipartisan College Access Bill Clears House, Sets Stage for First Higher Education Act Renewal in a Decade

Washington, DC -- Today, Rep. Mike Castle (R-DE), senior member on the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor, spoke on the House floor to urge support for the Conference Report on the Higher Education Opportunity Act. The U.S. House of Representatives gave final approval to an overhaul of our nation's higher education laws today, advancing key reforms to make college more affordable and accessible to American students. The Report was approved with a strong bipartisan vote of 380-49. The measure now moves to the Senate for final clearance before being sent to the President for his signature.

"American families are struggling with financial burdens like never before and one of the growing challenges is the cost of a college education, which has been rising steadily for decades." said Rep. Castle. "This bill attempts to finally face the reason for those cost increases."

Earlier this year, the House overwhelmingly approved legislation to hold colleges and universities accountable for the unfettered tuition increases that are pushing the dream of a college education out of reach to many Americans.

The bipartisan legislation is designed to: empower consumers through transparency in college costs, financial aid, and accreditation; update programs to better meet the needs of changing student populations; and strengthen financial aid opportunities.

Specifically, the Higher Education Opportunity Act would:

- Streamline the federal student financial aid application process;

- Make textbook costs more manageable for students by, among other things, helping them plan for textbook expenses in advance of each semester;

- Allow students to receive year-round Pell Grant scholarships;

- Strengthen college readiness programs;

- Increase college aid and support programs for veterans and military families;

- Improve safety on college campuses and help schools recover and rebuild after a disaster;

- Ensure equal college opportunities and fair learning environments for students with disabilities; and

- Strengthen our nation's workforce and economic competitiveness by boosting science, technology, and foreign language educational opportunities.

To view a more detailed list of how this bill will help rein in the ever-rising cost of a college education, [click here](#).