

Rep. Doris Matsui Votes to Make College More Affordable Works to Bring Better Access to College Edu

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WASHINGTON, D.C. — This week, Rep. Doris Matsui voted for legislation to address the soaring price of college tuition and remove other obstacles that make it harder for qualified students to go to college.

On Thursday, the U.S. House of Representatives approved the College Opportunity and Affordability Act (H.R. 4137), which would reform and strengthen the nation's higher education programs. The legislation is the second major step that Congress has taken to make college more affordable and accessible for all qualified students. Last year, Congress enacted into law a \$20 billion increase in college financial aid over the next five years, the largest increase in student aid since the G.I. Bill of 1944.

"This bill will help make sure that students have a clearer path to achieving their educational goals. Providing accessible education is a key part of preserving the American dream and way of life," said Rep. Matsui.

An October 2007 report from the College Board showed that, over the previous five years, tuition and fees had increased across the board, at public and private colleges and at two-year and four-year colleges. In Calif., tuition and fees at four-year public institutions grew by nine percent between 2006-07 and 2007-8. To combat this, the bill encourages colleges to rein in price increases, ensuring that the state maintains its commitments to higher education funding, and provides students and families with information on college pricing and the factors driving tuition increases.

The legislation also strengthens provisions previously approved by the House to avoid conflicts of interest in the student loan programs. The bill's new provisions include requiring better consumer disclosures and protections on private student loans.

"When we invest in the education of our country, we invest in a better, more prosperous future for all Americans. A highly-educated and trained workforce will keep our nation at the forefront of the global economy," said Rep. Matsui.

In addition, the College Opportunity and Affordability Act would:

Streamline the student financial aid application process

Make textbook costs more manageable by providing advance counseling

Allow students to receive year-round Pell Grant scholarships

Increase aid and support programs for veterans and military families

"The College Opportunity and Affordability Act will help ensure that qualified, eager students will have better access to a college education. As we look to the future health of our great country, it is imperative that every American has the opportunity to pursue their education," said Rep. Matsui.

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