



The Daily Whip

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THURSDAY, MARCH 30, 2006

House Meets At...	Last Vote Predicted At...
10:00 a.m.: Legislative Business Ten "One Minutes" Per Side	3:00 p.m.

FLOOR SCHEDULE AND BILL SUMMARY

H.Res. 742 – 2nd Rule providing for consideration of H.R. 609 – College Access and Opportunity Act of 2005 (Rules). This 2nd restrictive rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions and makes in order 8 amendments.

H.R. 609 – College Access and Opportunity Act of 2005 (Rep. Boehner – Education and the Workforce) (Subject to a Rule-Complete Consideration). HR609 was marked up last July by the Education and the Workforce Committee and was reported out on a party-line vote of 27-20. Several provisions included in the Committee-reported bill were taken out of HR609 and included in the recently enacted budget reconciliation bill. Some highlights of the remaining portions of HR609 include:

- Pell Grants – the bill increases authorization of the maximum grant from \$5,800 to \$6,000 (subject to appropriation), creates a "Pell Grants Plus" program, and authorizes awards year-round. (Republicans have frozen the maximum Pell Grant for the past three years at \$4,050);
- Proprietary Schools – the bill creates a single definition of a higher education institution. Also makes changes to current law (the 90/10 Rule) by moving the requirement that schools obtain at least 10% of their revenues from sources other than student aid programs into the Program Participation Agreement;
- Minority Serving Institutions – the bill reauthorizes funding for HBCUs, Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities, and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), and creates a new graduate program for HSIs;
- College Cost – establishes a College Affordability Index, requiring the Secretary to collect data regarding college tuition and fees;
- Transfer of Credits – Requires institutions to publicly disclose their transfer of credit policies, but these policies cannot be based solely on the accreditor of the sending college so long as the accreditor is recognized by the Secretary of Education.

The higher education provisions in the budget reconciliation bill included \$12 billion in cuts to student assistance programs. Those provisions: raised interest rates on parent borrowers from 7.9% to 8.5%; raised loan consolidation fees; reduced excessive subsidies to lenders, but Republicans refused to re-direct those dollars into low-interest loans or grants to help students as Democrats believed they should do; and required that student and parent borrowers be charged a 1% insurance fee on college loans.

Despite the fact that the average tuition and fees for four-year public colleges have risen over 40% since 2001, Republicans have done nothing to help students better afford college, and have in fact passed harmful provisions to make it harder. The average student now owes \$17,500 when he/she graduates. When Pell Grants were first enacted to help low-income families, it covered 72% of the average cost of a four-year public college, today it pays for only 30%.

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Yesterday, the House completed general debate and considered several amendments to HR609. Today, the 2nd rule for this bill makes in order 8 amendments, seven of which are debatable for 10 minutes each:

- **Biggert Amendment.** To allow unaccompanied homeless youth to be considered independent students upon verification of their living situation by a McKinney-Vento Act school district liaison, a shelter director, or a financial aid administrator.
- **Gohmert Amendment.** To strike Section 131 (f) regarding certain reporting requirements for colleges and universities; and to strike Section 495(a)(1) that would allow states to apply to the Secretary of Education to become recognized accreditors.
- **Kennedy (RI)/Ros-Lehtinen Amendment.** To make child and adolescent mental health professionals eligible for loan forgiveness under the high need professions program.
- **King (IA) Amendment.** To require institutions that receive any federal funding (including grants and scholarships) to submit to the Department of Education an annual report stating whether race, color, or national origin is considered in the student admissions process. If race, color, or nation origin is considered in the student admissions process, then the report must contain a subsequent analysis of how these factors are considered in the process.
- **Kirk/Larsen (WA) Amendment.** To express the sense of Congress that student exchange and language education programs should focus on Chinese and Arabic, in light of the global importance of China and the Middle East.
- **Souder/Bishop (NY) Amendment.** To strike language in the bill that prohibits schools from denying transfers of credit based solely on the accreditation of the sending institution. The amendment maintains the requirement that schools publicly disclose their transfer policies, and would also require a school to disclose any policy that would deny transfers of credit solely on the accreditation of the institution where the credit was earned.
- **George Miller/Kildee/Grijalva/Davis(IL)/Scott (VA) Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute (30 minutes).** To cut interest rates in half for students with subsidized loans; establish a new predominantly Black Serving Institution program to boost college participation rates of low-income, black students; establish a new graduate Hispanic Serving Institution program; repeal the Single Lender rule; and to create a pilot program for year-round Pell Grants. **Democrats are urged to VOTE YES.**
- **McKeon ProForma Amendment for the purpose of debate (10 minutes).**

This bill is a missed opportunity to offer true assistance to America's students and, therefore, Democrats are urged to VOTE NO on Final Passage of HR609.

TOMORROW'S OUTLOOK

The GOP Leadership has announced the following schedule: on Friday, no votes are expected in the House.

Daily Quote...

"If the moderates vote against the budget bill, it will likely fail because most Democrats also oppose it."

- A news story in the *Wall Street Journal* this morning