

109TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

S. RES. 395

Establishing the American Competitiveness through Education (ACE)
resolution.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 9, 2006

Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. REID, Mrs. BOXER, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. STABENOW, and Mr. MENENDEZ) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

RESOLUTION

Establishing the American Competitiveness through
Education (ACE) resolution.

Whereas one of the top priorities for our families and our country is ensuring that young people get the education they need, from early childhood to higher education, to succeed at work and in life;

Whereas the economy and future of the United States depend on maintaining a highly skilled and educated workforce with the ability to compete in an increasingly high-tech global economy;

Whereas millions of hard-working middle-class families now struggle to afford the rising cost of higher education, which averages \$12,127 per year at a public 4-year col-

lege and \$29,026 per year at a private 4-year college for the 2005–2006 school year;

Whereas between 2000 and 2005, the cost of tuition and fees increased 57 percent at public 4-year colleges and 32 percent at private 4-year colleges;

Whereas during the 1985–1986 school year, the maximum Federal Pell Grant covered 55 percent of the cost of tuition, fees, room and board at a public 4-year college, but during the 2005–2006 school year the maximum Federal Pell Grant covers only 33 percent of such cost, leaving today's students burdened with more debt or unable to afford a college education at all;

Whereas at the same time that college costs are rising substantially, President Bush recently signed into law the largest cut in student loan programs in the history of the Nation and now proposes a budget for fiscal year 2007 that would eliminate new funding for Federal Perkins Loans and freeze the maximum Federal Pell Grant award at \$4,050, where the maximum Federal Pell Grant has been since 2003, reducing the real value of the maximum Federal Pell Grant to the families who depend upon it;

Whereas the President's budget also breaks promises to our children, their parents, and their schools;

Whereas school districts must meet tough new standards under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Public Law 107–110; 115 Stat. 1425), but the President's budget underfunds this effort by \$15,400,000,000;

Whereas all children deserve an education that will prepare them for the 21st century global economy, but the President is proposing to leave 3,700,000 children behind by

failing to fully fund title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.) at the level promised in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001;

Whereas in 1975 Congress committed to fully funding the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.), in order to provide an appropriate education to students with special needs, yet for the second year in a row the President's budget retreats on that commitment by reducing the Federal Government's share of the cost for educating students with special needs, placing a greater financial burden on States and local school districts;

Whereas research shows that every dollar invested in high-quality early childhood education yields \$13 in benefits to the public, but the President's budget would eliminate Head Start services for 19,000 children;

Whereas despite the importance of education, the President now is proposing a \$2,100,000,000 cut to Federal education funding, which would be the largest cut in the 26-year history of the Department of Education;

Whereas the President's budget proposes to eliminate or substantially reduce funding for 42 existing education programs, including Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities State Grants, Educational Technology State Grants, Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Programs, Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR-UP), and Federal TRIO Programs;

Whereas every child deserves a safe, healthy, supervised place to go after school, but the President's budget denies

these opportunities to 2,000,000 disadvantaged students by funding 21st Century Community Learning Centers at less than half the level promised in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001; and

Whereas the education cuts in the President's budget would eliminate the ability of many working families to ensure a quality education for their children, deny many young people the opportunities that flow from a college education, reduce the competitiveness of the United States workforce, and harm the Nation's economy: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved,*

2 **SECTION 1. SENSE OF THE SENATE.**

3 It is the sense of the Senate that—

4 (1) Congress should act to make college more
5 affordable by—

6 (A) increasing tax benefits to offset college
7 costs, such as expanding the Hope Scholarship
8 Credit and the deductibility of college tuition;

9 (B) substantially increasing the size of
10 Federal Pell Grants to better reflect the in-
11 crease in the cost of higher education; and

12 (C) making student loans more affordable
13 by reducing interest rates and fees for students
14 and families;

15 (2) Congress should keep its promises to the
16 children of the United States, particularly by fully
17 funding the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, the

1 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and the
2 Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9831 et seq.); and

3 (3) Congress should reject the cuts in the Presi-
4 dent's education budget for fiscal year 2007.

5 **SEC. 2. SHORT TITLE.**

6 This resolution may be cited as the "American Com-
7 petitiveness through Education Resolution" or the "ACE
8 Resolution".

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