



The Associated Students of Western Washington University

2013 Federal Priorities Agenda

Letter to the Washington Congressional Delegation:

February 2013

- As Congress moves forward into this new session, it faces both new opportunities and challenges in providing the opportunity for higher education for all students.

While the Pell Grant is exempted from the sequestration cuts delayed until March (at the time of this writing), other programs critical to student success are affected, including the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, federal work study, TRIO, and GEAR UP. If these cuts are realized, students of all backgrounds will find it harder to succeed in obtaining a college degree because of either decreased financial support or less preparedness before entering college.

12 years after first being introduced, the principles of the DREAM Act have still not been passed as legislation. The Associated Students firmly believe that higher education must be made accessible for everyone, regardless of their documentation status, and believe that action is overdue by Congress on this issue. Residents that are undocumented are vital to our country's success, and contribute to our economy and tax base the same as any other resident of our nation.

Additionally, the Associated Students believe that there needs to be basic

protections for our fellow students at for-profit institutions, most especially student veterans. Subject to intense recruiting by for-profit colleges, student veterans attend these institutions where the quality of education is unclear, drop-out rates are higher, and prospects for employment after graduation are uncertain.

As student debt has topped more than one trillion dollars nationwide, Congress must pass legislation to restructure our student loan system in order to make student debt more manageable as debt burdens grow.

There are many opportunities to Congress can take to improve the success of students, and we look forward to working with you to making sure they are realized.

Sincerely,

Ethan Glemaker
AS President

Patrick Stickney
AS VP for Governmental Affairs

The ASWWU firmly believes that college should be accessible and attainable by any student with a desire to learn and a passion for their education.

Federal Priorities: Current Bills

The DREAM Act

S.114 the Fairness for Struggling Students Act

- Allows private student loans to be discharged in bankruptcy.

H.R. 340 Protecting Financial Aid for Students and Taxpayers Act

- To amend the Higher Education Opportunity Act to restrict institutions of higher education from using revenues derived from Federal educational assistance funds for advertising, marketing, or recruiting purposes.

H.R. 357 GI Bill Tuition Fairness Act

- To require public institutions of higher education to charge veterans tuition and fees at the in-State tuition rates.

S.128, the Campus Sexual Violence and Elimination Act,

- Protects all persons on campus and improve “prevention related to campus sexual violence, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking.”

S. 47, the Violence against Women Act,

- Protects all women, both on and off campus against domestic violence.

H.R. 320, the Student Support Act

- Amend to support mental health care for all students at all levels of education, including higher education.

Federal Priorities: Policy to be Introduced in Legislation

- Placing the "automatic zero" for Expected Family Contribution for the maximum Pell Grant award back to annual parental incomes of \$32,000 instead of \$23,000.
- Increase Pell Grant funding levels.
- Make the Pell Grant a mandatory spending item
- Reintroduce the grace period on Stafford Loans from the William D. Ford Direct Loan Program and expand the period to 12 months after graduation instead of automatic repayment.
- Make income-based repayment a default for student loans
- Allow consolidation of private and federal student loans
- Reintroduce the Tyler Clementi Higher Education Anti-Harassment Bill as a means to ensure that all college students have access to a safe learning environment
- Include financial aid received through the GI Bill as part of the 90/10 rule



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