**Issue**: Protecting our Students and Taxpayers Act of 2013 or POST Act 2013

**Author(s)/Sponsor(s):** Heather Heffelmire (Vice Chair/Western Votes Representative for LAC)

**Endorsements**:

**Proposed Action Agenda Item Title**: POST Act 2013

1) Describe the Issue (what is the problem & what is the solution).  
  
 Currently for-profit institutions of higher education derive 90 percent of their funding from federal funding. Often, these institutions have high rates of failures and drop outs, and students that do graduate often aren’t prepared to or can’t find job opportunities. Additionally, for-profit schools often have predatory practices; potential students have charged these intuitions with calling them several times throughout the day and falsifying information in order to get them to enroll. Although public funds count for a majority of these schools’ funding, inadequate student education and high rates of failure mean taxpayers rarely see any returns on their investments.

Many opponents of for-profit institutions argue that they target minority and already disadvantaged populations. Veterans are also often targeted by these schools because the GI Bill doesn’t count towards the 90 percent cap on federal funds. Several veteran advocate groups charge that these schools don’t provide all the necessary information to veteran students and often lead them to wasting the benefits they worked so hard to receive.

The POST Act of 2013 works to amend title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 to cap the amount of federal funding these intuitions can receive at 85 percent and limit what proprietary institutions may treat as non-federal funds. The POST Act would more broadly define federal funds to include assistance that is provided to an institution on behalf of a student. This would count the GI Bill as federal funding and better safeguard veteran’s benefits. The POST Act would better ensure that federal funds are being allocated to higher education institutions that provide a public good rather than being wasted on institutions which do little to educate their students.

2) Please fill out a Strategy Chart.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Goals** | **Organizational Considerations** | **Constituents, Allies, & Opponents** | **Targets** | **Tactics** |
| **Long term**  See the POST Act come out of committee and passed.    **Intermediate**  Have the POST Act lobbied for on the Federal Lobby Trip.  **Short Term**    Get LAC to support taking an official stance on the POST Act and see it put on the Federal Agenda. |  | **Constituents**    Students who are undocumented (1079 Students)    **Allies**    Students  Parents  Veterans  Public Schools  **Opponents**  For-Profit Institutions | **Primary**    **Opposition**:    **Support**:    **Secondary** | **Campus Collaborations:** |

3) Please explain briefly how/if this issue meets the following qualifications:

**i. Is it winnable?**

The POST Act of 2013 has been referred to committee and according to gov.track.us has only a one percent chance of being enacted. While I don’t think it would be worth our efforts to make this a number one priority I think it’s still something we should support on our Federal Agenda.

**ii. Does it directly impact and improve students’ lives?**

Definitely, for-profit intuitions often leave students is high amounts of debt with few opportunities. Often, these schools charge more than typical four year public institutions and students get a much lower quality of education. The schools are charged with taking advantage of poor, minority, disadvantaged, and veteran students. The POST Act would help put more restrictions on these students and better protect students from these institutions.   
  
**iii. Does it have a clear target?**

Yes, currently the bill is in the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions whose chairman is Senator Harkin (D-IA) and the House Committee on Education and the Workforce chaired by Representative Kline (R-MN). Our target would be members of these two committees.

**iv. Does it build a measurable amount of power?**

I think there is potential to work with a lot of veterans groups including our own Veterans Outreach Center and also work with the administration as many public schools are opposed to giving federal funding to for-profit institutions as well.

**v. Does it have a clear and realistic time frame?**

The bill is already in committee and there is no sign of it being brought to the floor for a vote anytime soon. This doesn’t really provide us with a clear time-frame, but it does give us time to organize and support this bill.

**vi. Does it have a local/state/federal organizing and lobbying angle?**

This is a federal bill so all our organizing and lobbying efforts would be made on a federal level.

**vii. Could students build a diverse campus coalition around this issue?**

As I mentioned in question iv there is potential to work with on-campus veteran groups, as well as, working with ESC clubs and administration.

**viii. Is it likely to be debated and acted upon by the Congress in the next year?**

Unfortunately no, according to govtrack.us there is a very small chance that the bill will get past committee.