

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**CHAIRMAN KENNEDY HOLDS MARK-UP FOR HEA LEGISLATION**

***Kennedy: No student should have to turn down a college education***

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Today, Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Chairman of the United States Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, convened an executive session of the Committee to move forward on two bills that will help millions of students attend college, the Higher Education Access Act and the Higher Education Amendments of 2007.

The Higher Education Access Act will provide substantial benefits to students, including increased need-based grant aid for low-income students and expanded loan repayment and forgiveness options to help borrowers manage their debt. The Act will pay for these changes by reducing unnecessary subsidies to lenders in the student loan program, and directing the savings back to these key student benefits. The Higher Education Amendments of 2007 will take steps to reform the student loan program, hold colleges accountable for college costs, and improve training programs for K-12 teachers, as well as strengthen many key higher education programs through the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.

Senator Kennedy said, "These bi-partisan bills introduced by the Committee signal to students that their futures are our top priority. These bills make a promise to America's future workforce and community leaders. We've increased need-based grant aid to low-income students so more students can afford to attend college, and we've given students the tools they need to better manage debt -- we should not force students interested in public service to choose between their passion and their paycheck. We have also taken steps to reform the student loan program to ensure it is working for students – not banks."

The cost of college has more than tripled in the last 20 years, with the average cost of attending a 4-year public college almost \$13,000. As a result, 400,000 qualified students don't attend a 4-year college each year because they can't afford it.

Loan debt is forcing borrowers to delay major life choices, such as buying a home, getting married, or starting a family. It prevents some borrowers from accepting their dream job, because it doesn't pay enough.

Kennedy's proposal increases the maximum grant for Pell-eligible students to \$5,100 next year and \$5,400 in 2011. A chart detailing what this increase would mean in every state is attached to this release, as well as a section-by-section of both pieces of legislation.

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