



March 4, 2008

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COLLEGE OF THE HOLY CROSS, MA
CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY, NE
FAIRFIELD UNIVERSITY, CT
FORDHAM UNIVERSITY, NY
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY, DC
GONZAGA UNIVERSITY, WA
JOHN CARROLL UNIVERSITY, OH
LE MOYNE COLLEGE, NY
LOYOLA COLLEGE OF MARYLAND, MD
LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY, CA
LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO, IL
LOYOLA UNIVERSITY NEW ORLEANS, LA
MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY, WI
REGIS UNIVERSITY, CO
ROCKHURST UNIVERSITY, MO
SAINT JOSEPH'S UNIVERSITY, PA
SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY, MO
SAINT PETER'S COLLEGE, NJ
SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY, CA
SEATTLE UNIVERSITY, WA
SPRING HILL COLLEGE, AL
UNIVERSITY OF DETROIT MERCY, MI
UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO, CA
UNIVERSITY OF SCRANTON, PA
WHEELING JESUIT UNIVERSITY, WV
XAVIER UNIVERSITY, OH

The Honorable George Miller
Chairman
Committee on Education and Labor
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Howard P. "Buck" McKeon
Ranking Member
Committee on Education and Labor
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Miller and Ranking Member McKeon,

On behalf of the Associations listed below, we write in support of the Education Disaster Loan provision that was included in H.R. 4137, the College Opportunity and Affordability Act (Title VIII, Section 864). We are asking for the Senate to recede to the House on the Education Disaster Loan provision in conference on the Higher Education Act (HEA) reauthorization.

The Education Disaster Loan provision was initially conceived as part of an effort to address the devastation of Hurricane's Katrina and Rita in 2005, but has quickly evolved into a broader effort to meet the national need for higher education institutions to recover from major disasters. Higher education institutions are economic engines in communities and play a major role in how quickly regions recover from disasters.

Under this provision, permanent guaranteed disaster loans would be distributed by the U.S. Department of Education to higher education institutions suffering losses incurred as a result of a major natural or man-made disaster to meet the immediate cash flow loss for institutions of higher education. Loan funding would be separately funded by Congress after a disaster and would originate from the federal treasury, and, only those institutions located in a federally declared disaster area (as defined under the Robert T. Stafford Act) would be eligible to receive an education disaster loan.

Institutions eligible for the program would receive a low-interest loan, with repayment spread out over 30 years. The funds would be flexible, tailored to the needs of individual institutions and regions and could be used to support reimbursement for lost tuition and other revenues; faculty salaries aimed at faculty retention; and construction costs for replacement or renovation associated with the disaster. The purpose of the loan program would be to provide supplemental assistance to institutions. It would not replace Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) assistance or insurance reimbursements.

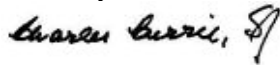
We have attached an addendum which requests a technical addition that would clarify that institutions of higher education are still eligible for FEMA and insurance assistance. We strongly recommend that this language be added.

Higher Education Amendments of 2008 and College Opportunity and Affordability Act of 2008
Education Disaster Loan Provision
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We urge you to support enactment of an Education Disaster and Emergency Relief Loan program in Conference for the Higher Education Act. With such a program in place, institutions across the country will know that if a major disaster affects their campus that a federal loan will be available to assist them in becoming fully operational again.

We thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,



Charles L. Currie, SJ
President

On behalf of:

American Association of Community Colleges
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Council on Education
Association of American Universities
Association of Community College Trustees
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
Council for Higher Education Accreditation
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
National Association of College and University Business Officers
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges
National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

cc: House Members on Education and Labor Committee

Technical Language

We ask for a technical addition to H.R. 4137, Section 864 (f) Reduction in Loan Amounts:

Insert “(1)” To determine the amount of a loan...and the Small Business Administration.

“(2) Nothing in this section shall prohibit institutions from receiving collateral source compensation that they would otherwise be eligible to receive from insurance or FEMA.”

This language will clarify that this new loan program is not meant to replace FEMA assistance or insurance for which the institution would otherwise be eligible to receive.