Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 2, 2005

The Honorable J. Dennis Hastert
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jim Nussle
Chairman
Committee on the Budget
309 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Spratt
Ranking Member
Committee on the Budget
B-17 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Boehner
Chairman
Education and the Workforce Committee
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable George Miller
Ranking Member
Education and the Workforce Committee
2101 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Hastert, Leader Pelosi, Chairmen and Ranking Members:

We are writing to express our opposition to House plans to cut $14.3 billion from the federal student aid programs – the single largest cut in the student aid program's history.

The $14.3 billion in cuts were passed by the House Education and the Workforce Committee as part of the House budget reconciliation bill. These cuts were made by: raising student loan interest rate caps; raising taxes on student loans; raising interest rates on consolidation loans; and, reducing some of the excessive subsidies paid to student lenders. We respectfully ask you to reexamine these cuts to students.

We are concerned that the proposed changes of the Education and the Workforce Committee will result in the typical student paying $5,800 more for college loans – for a student that is already $17,500 in debt. It is simply wrong to force our nation's students, most often youth, and their families to shoulder the burden of our country's debt.

These changes are not simply an additional burden for the Congress to place on students – but the cuts may cause some students to forgo their college degree. For most low-income, first generation and minority students, financial barriers are the principle factor that determines whether they will successfully complete college. American students need and deserve more affordable college opportunities, not additional barriers to achievement.

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Time and again, we hear from researchers, CEOs and even our own colleagues that investing in our nation's education system is the key to improving America's global economic competitiveness. The proposed cuts to our country's higher education student aid programs will negatively impact our workforce and economy.

As college tuition and loan debt continue to rise and the buying power of grants declines, Congress should take steps to make college more affordable. Please help our nation's students as they work hard to achieve their dreams of a college degree.

Thank you for your careful consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Bob Scott Tom Udall Chris Van Hollen

Raúl M. Grijalva

Leonard L. Boswell Loretta Sanchez Raúl Ruiz

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