

July 20, 2007

The Honorable George Miller
Chairman
Committee on Education and Labor
United States House of Representatives
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Howard McKeon
Ranking Member
Committee on Education and Labor
United States House of Representatives
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Miller and Ranking Member McKeon:

As members of the Tapping America's Potential Coalition (TAP), we are writing to thank the Committee on Education and Labor for approving provisions in the College Cost Reduction Act of 2007 (H.R. 2669) to ensure highly qualified teachers are placed in classrooms.

TAP is a coalition of 16 national business organizations dedicated to improving America's competitive position by supporting policies that will increase the innovation capacity of the United States. TAP is particularly focused on policies that would improve U.S. science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education at all levels. Since 2005, the Coalition has been taking action to reach the goal of doubling the number of STEM graduates by 2015. We collectively view the Higher Education Act (HEA) as a national security issue and vital component to addressing America's long-term competitiveness.

Recruiting and retaining high-quality and effective teachers is a key priority for TAP. Research shows that the quality of K-12 teaching is the single most important factor in improving student achievement. We are pleased that section 301 of the H.R. 2669 creates TEACH grants for undergraduates and graduates who plan to become teachers. We especially appreciate that bonus grants are offered to those students who pursue STEM undergraduate degrees. We are also pleased that the bill creates a program to strengthen teacher preparation programs at minority-serving institutions.

Thank you again for your leadership on this issue. As you move forward with reauthorizing HEA this year, we urge the Committee to continue to focus efforts on maintaining America's overall competitiveness, such as aligning teacher programs with states' content standards, assessment, and curricula; aligning K-12 education with college and workforce expectations; and motivating students to study and enter STEM careers.

Sincerely,

AeA
Business Roundtable
Business-Higher Education Forum
Council on Competitiveness
Information Technology Association of America
Information Technology Industry Council
Minority Business RoundTable
National Association of Manufacturers

National Defense Industrial Association
National Venture Capital Association
Semiconductor Industry Association
Software & Information Industry Association
TechNet
Technology CEO Council
Telecommunications Industry Association
U.S. Chamber of Commerce