



Statement of Robert Shireman
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**National Expert on Student Loans
Praises Key Reforms in Senate Higher Education Measures,
Urges Rapid Passage**

“This year, Congress has a real opportunity to make college more affordable and accessible for a new generation of students. Both the House and Senate education committees have now approved legislation with several provisions that will help reduce the hazards of student debt and give families earlier and more complete information about aid and loans.

“Among the most important provisions in the Senate legislation: ensuring that student loan borrowers have fair and realistic repayment options; increasing the value of the Pell grant; and simplifying the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), making it easier for families to get the help they need to pay for college.

“The Income Based Repayment plan recognizes the economic realities that student borrowers face today. It caps federal student loan payments at a reasonable percentage of income, limits interest buildup in hardship situations, and cancels remaining debt after 25 years of responsible payments. The bill also encourages young people to pursue critical public service careers by canceling certain loans after 10 years on the job. Given the problems in the student loan system, and the growing reliance on loans to finance higher education, reducing the risks of student debt should be a top priority for lawmakers.

“By reducing excessive lender subsidies, increasing grants, and improving loan terms, this legislation restores some balance to the federal aid programs, putting the focus back on helping students. Recent developments and news reports underscore the fact that student loan reform is long overdue. We urge both the House and Senate to support these important provisions.”

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The Project on Student Debt works to increase public understanding of the changing role of student debt and its implications for our families, economy and society. Recognizing that loans play a critical role in making college possible, the Project’s goal is to identify cost-effective solutions that expand educational opportunity, protect family financial security, and advance economic competitiveness. The Project on Student Debt is managed by The Institute for College Access & Success, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization working to make higher education more available and affordable for people of all backgrounds. For more information see www.projectonstudentdebt.org and www.ticas.org.