



For Immediate Release: October 26, 2005

Barrow Opposes \$15 Billion Raid on Student Aid

Georgia Congressman votes against ill conceived budget reconciliation amendment that would force students to pay thousands more in increased loan interest rates and fees

Washington, DC – During today's meeting of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, 12th District Georgia Congressman John Barrow took aim at ongoing attempts to cut federal student aid programs by a projected \$15 billion.

The cuts, which would be the largest in the history of the country's student aid programs, passed the committee late this afternoon. In an attempt to try and offset federal spending, the measure raises student loan interest rate caps and taxes, increases interest rates and fees on borrowers who consolidate their loans, and eliminates borrower benefits that encourage on-time repayment through lower interest rates. Barrow voted against the cuts.

“At a time when the cost of college is growing out of reach for more and more families, it's a serious step in the wrong direction to try and balance the budget on the backs of America's students,” Barrow said during today's Committee meeting. “The money that we invest in education today is an investment in our future – an investment that will be paid back ten-fold by having a better, smarter, and stronger 21st Century workforce.”

According to the Education and Workforce Committee's (Minority Staff) analysis of data from the Congressional Budget Office, the average student borrower already carries \$17,500 in debt. It is estimated that today's proposed cuts in student aid will result in the average student being forced to pay an additional \$5,800 more for their college loans.

“Earlier this month, Congress passed a supplemental energy bill with huge giveaways to big oil companies – handouts to some of the most profitable businesses in the world,” Barrow said. “If we really want to rein in spending, balance the budget, and invest in America's future, our priority should not be to pull the plug on billions in student aid. Members of this Committee and this Congress should never be forced to balance the budget by raising the cost of college.”

###

Contact: Harper Lawson, (202) 225-2823