

Washington, D.C. - Congressman John Barrow (GA-12) voted today to make the single largest investment in aid to help students and families pay for college in our nation's history, and at no cost to taxpayers. H.R. 3221, the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act (SAFRA), will make college education affordable to more American students than ever before, and help build a world-class community college system. SAFRA's passage will help build a stronger, more competitive American economy for the future while saving taxpayers money.

"This is a crucial part of rebuilding the American economy. It will make sure that young people have the ability to attend college or get career training, and that our work force remains the most highly skilled and effective in the world," said Barrow.

SAFRA includes an amendment introduced by Congressman Barrow. The amendment provides \$50 million over the course of five years to allow the Secretary of Education to provide technical assistance to institutions of higher education in operating the Direct Loan program, including assisting institutions with the transition into the program.

SAFRA is a major component in President Obama's initiative to make sure that America once again leads the world in college graduates by 2020. SAFRA will reform the system of federal student loans to save the taxpayers \$87 billion and will direct \$10 billion back to the Treasury to reduce entitlement spending. SAFRA will change the way the student loan system functions by originating new loans through the government's Direct Loan program, but will maintain competition among private lenders and non-profits to provide better customer service for student borrowers. This will make college loans more reliable for students and families - and ensure that loans operate in the best interests of borrowers by reducing many of the potential conflicts of interest that exist in the current loan system.

"This reform is long overdue. It will eliminate billions in waste, while dramatically expanding access to essential educational opportunities."

As the largest-ever investment in higher education, this bill will also significantly increase government grant and loan assistance for college tuition payments. Pell Grants, already distributed to more than 7 million students, will increase from \$5,350 today to \$6,900 by 2019. Over the next ten years, SAFRA will invest \$107.7 million in Georgia's 12th District, and 25,547 students in the 12th District will be eligible for a Pell Grant award in the 2010-2011 academic year.

SAFRA also keeps interest rates low on government-subsidized loans, makes substantial investments in early childhood education, expands the Perkins low-cost loan program to every U.S. college, and simplifies the process of applying for student financial aid.

"College costs more than ever, and families are already struggling," added Barrow. "Allowing our students to graduate with a better education and less debt is the best way to make sure that American workers remain competitive long into the future."

Congressman Barrow inserted the following statement into the record in support of SAFRA:

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M. Speaker,

I rise today to express my gratitude to the Chairman of the Committee on Education and Labor, Chairman Miller, and Ranking Member Kline, for working with me to include an amendment I offered in the Manager's Amendment of this bill.

I believe The Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act will make college education more affordable for more American students than ever before, transform early education opportunities, and ultimately help build a stronger, more competitive American economy for the future, while saving taxpayers money.

For the reforms in this bill to be effective, it's critical that our colleges and universities have the right tools to make these reforms as successful as possible. My amendment requires the Secretary of Education to provide funding and technical assistance to institutions of higher education in operating the Direct Loan program, including assisting institutions with the transition into the program.

Right now, college costs more than ever, while families are struggling more than ever. Allowing our students to graduate with a better education and less debt is the best way to make sure that American workers remain competitive long into the future.

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Contact: □ Jane Brodsky, (202) 225-2823

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